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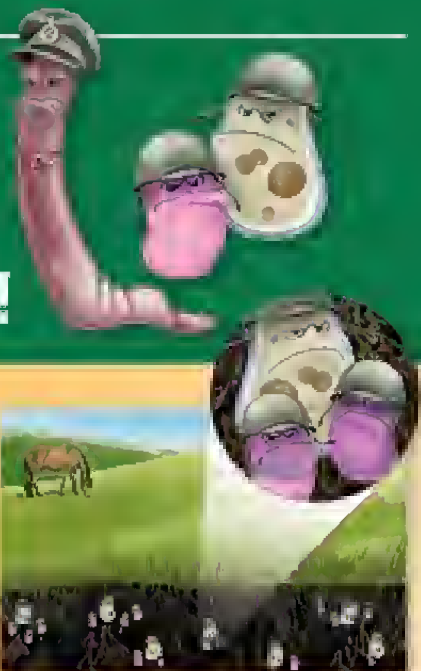
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ADVERTORIAL

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Vital, healthy soil contains legions of microbes, the tireless soldiers that work hard every day to nourish your plants.

They include:

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"Officer" Arthropods break up debris and aerate soil

Earthworms, the Field Marshals, provide nutrient-rich castings and aeration

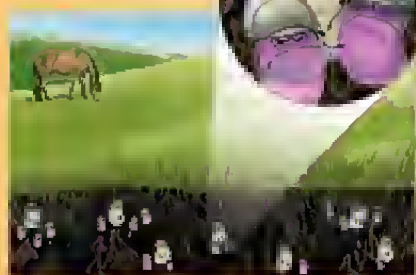
Without this army, soil would be a barren wasteland subject to compaction and infestation, unable to support plant life. Interestingly, each type of soil ecosystem has its own "designer army" of microbial soldiers, tailored to the needs of the plants that live there.

But regardless of which ecosystem lives in your back yard, its army, like all armies, needs optimal feeding for optimal success. Food such as Bradfield Organics® Fertilizers, rich in organic matter and a combination of readily- and slowly-available nutrients from natural sources, will keep your microbial armies fueled, healthy and marching at full bore to make sure your plants are vigorous, productive and beautiful.

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AGRICULTURAL

Productive agricultural soils are fairly evenly split between armies of bacteria and fungi.



For more information, please call 800-551-9564 or visit our web site at www.bradfieldorganics.com

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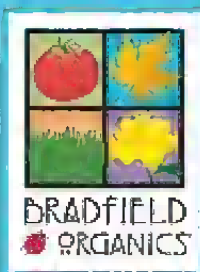
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This noted rosarian ditches the chemicals to find that his roses grow stronger, stay healthier, and bloom their heads off.

—By *G. Michael Shoup*

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A tiny country in the north of Africa boasts a big cuisine. Call it the other Mediterranean diet.

—By *Deborah Madison*



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ON THE COVER
Zesty greens—mizuna, spiny mesclun, and arugula—are the starting point for a flavorful salad that includes red and gold beets, Gorgonzola, roasted walnuts, and orange sections.
Photograph by Rob Cardillo

THOUGHT LINES

Let me begin by saying a huge and heartfelt thank-you to everyone who has emailed, written, phoned, or otherwise let us know how much you enjoy the new *Organic Gardening*. We've been overwhelmed—and gratified—by the enthusiastic support our new direction has received from so many different communities, individuals, and professionals in the field of organic gardening and living.

As a way to express our gratitude, we, with our advertising partners, have grown a whole gardenful of exciting contests and offers. As you read through this issue, you'll find New Chapter's Sacred Seeds Challenge, supporting a garden-by-garden campaign to preserve medicinal herbs and biodiversity, with the prize being a trip to its botanical reserve in Costa Rica. Rancho La Puerta, which was featured in the February/March issue, is offering a culinary-spa vacation to winners of its Holiday Recipe contest (and there are second and third prizes, too). Aael Lundberg Family Farms is giving you the chance to win a weeklong visit to Fattoria Poggio Alloro, an organic *agriturismo* destination in the gorgeous countryside of Tuscany. Located near Siena and the historic hill town San Gimignano, Fattoria Poggio Alloro is run by the Fioroni family, who raise olives, grapes, vegetables, fruits, herbs, and a heritage crop of saffron; daughter Sarah will provide a cooking lesson in the farm kitchen and Alessandro Tombelli will guide our winners on a tour of the region's most beautiful gardens. The farm will feature in our December/January issue, but enter the contest today to ensure a chance of winning. There is more, too, like an exclusive organic seed offer from Seed Savers Exchange of varieties chosen by our newest contributing editor, the award-winning chef and author Deborah Madison. Plus, we're reinstating our We Love This Tip award, sponsored by Bradfield Organics.

When I think of our magazine, I think of it as a garden fence on which we are all leaning, swapping advice, sharing stories, and learning from each other about what works best and what doesn't work at all. That's how we learn to be gardeners: by talking and reading about gardening. One of my touchstones in garden literature is *Acres and Pains*, by the great American humorist and



wannabe farmer, S.J. Perelman. Perhaps best known for giving the Marx Brothers some great gags, and for not being able to survive without regular ingestions of pastrami, Perelman dabbled in GTY on a property in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The first time I read *Acres and Pains* was while making a big lumpy field into a big formal garden. While I may not have had the Perelmans' pond, which came complete with bubbling oilcans and spectral lights twinkling through the bog, I did have a mound of building rubble that made a cozy condo for rabbits. But through the tears of laughter (and sometimes frustration) that blurred my vision, I could imagine the heap as a splendid classical mound topped by a viewing platform from which to survey my estate. Boy, did I have a lot to learn, but that didn't stop me. And it's clear from the success that *Organic Gardening*—and organic gardening—are enjoying, it's not stopping a whole bunch of you, either.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Ethne Clarke in dark ink.

Ethne Clarke
Editor-in-Chief



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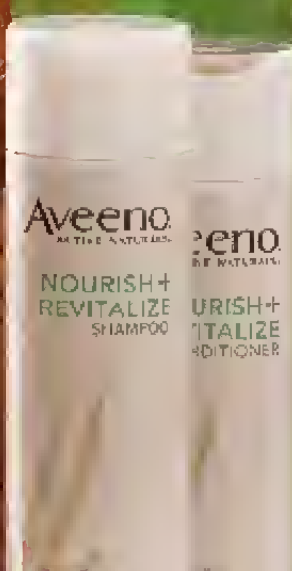
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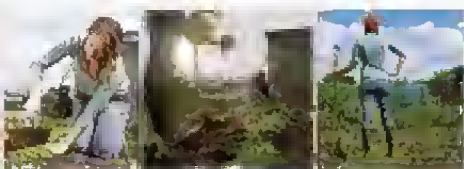
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Stripping Out Nature's Nutrients?

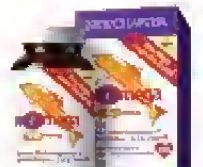
As an organic gardener, you know that stripping nutrients from the soil will impact your food.

That's why you rely on nature instead of harsh chemicals to grow delicious, pure and nutritionally whole food. The same idea applies to whole fish oil.

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For more information about the benefits of naturally pure fish oils like Wholemega®, visit organicgardening.com/fishoil.

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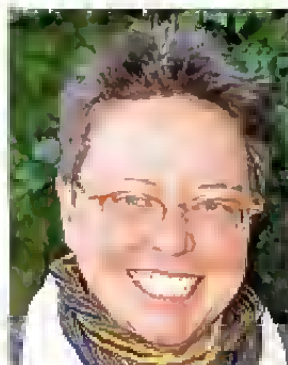
mike shoup

He's a notorious rose rustler from Central Texas, and his holdout, the Antique Rose Emporium at Brenham, and its San Antonio outpost are world-renowned as sources of top-quality roses of every kind. Their exceptional vigor is enhanced by Shoup's organic growing practices.



elaine brubaker

An award-winning Minneapolis-based landscape architect, Brubaker credits a passion for travel and history for kindling an understanding of land forms and artistic process. Working on her family's dairy farm bred a knack for problem solving that's integral to her work today.



deborah madison

From her New Mexico base, and with a trogl of top awards for her books and writings, Madison is a premier advocate for farm-to-table cuisine, farmers' markets, chef-maintained gardens, heritage foods, and organic practices. Her focus: connecting people to the food they eat.



craig black

A nationally acclaimed writer and photographer, Black gardens in Madison County, Iowa, the land of covered bridges. Once vowing that he'd never live where palm trees cannot grow, he now tends perennial borders, an orchard, a vineyard—and a palm tree in his living room.

TIPS FROM OUR READERS

Quick Coring

we love this tip!

We get so many tomatoes that I end up freezing some; they are great in chili and soup. This year, while I was removing the stems with my knife,

I thought there should be a faster way. I tried my apple corer—I made this job so much faster!

Nancy Tittle
Whittier, California

Hold Those Sheets

Don't throw away those used dryer sheets. Use them for cleaning jobs instead of a paper towel. They are effective for wiping the frying pan clean before washing. Keep them near the paper towels and you will find many uses.

Pat Dixon
Hanipslead, Maryland

Scented dryer sheets are loaded with synthetic chemicals. We like unscented ones sold by companies such as Sun and Earth. We reuse

ours when potting plants. A piece in the bottom of the container keeps the soil from washing out.

Making Space

Every gardener has a favorite measuring tool for spacing seeds and plants. The one that works for me is a 4-foot length of L-shaped aluminum tubing. The kind that's used in awnings. I marked it off with a permanent marker at 3-inch, 4-inch, 6-inch, and 12-inch intervals, each on a different side. When seeding or planting, I just turn up the appropriate side; it's faster than a yardstick. I also have a 10-foot piece of 1-by-2 wood for 15- and 18-inch spacing.

E. H. Berenson
Chesterland, Ohio

Rug Mulch

I've always enjoyed your magazine, and especially liked touring the gardens at the Rodale Institute several years ago; everyone was so friendly!

Tip: What to do with a beautiful antique wool

carpet that moths have destroyed? I cut one into strips to make elegant, organic, weed-blocking garden paths in my vegetable garden. It is quite a conversation starter!

Martha Murdock
Boyertown, Pennsylvania

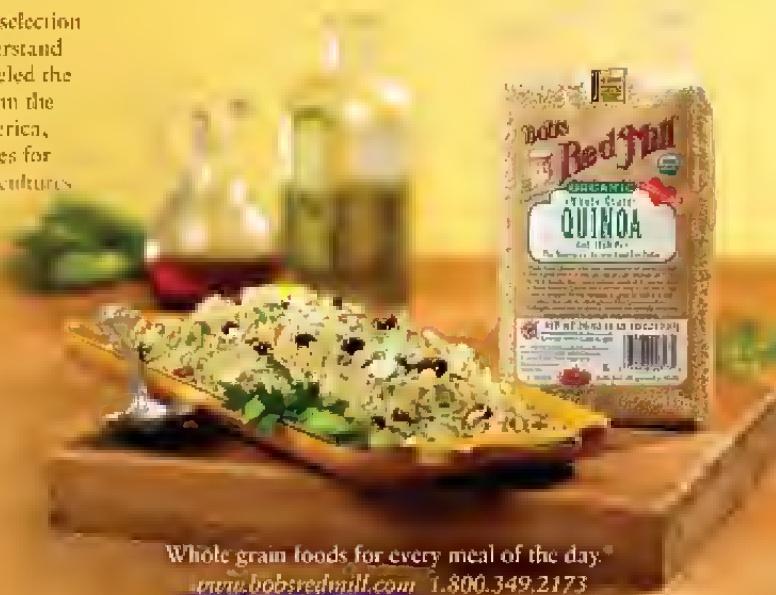
Repurposing Pool Netting

To the lady who was having trouble keeping critters from her strawberries (Letters, August–October), my find may be of help to her. I was looking for bird netting to protect my strawberries a few years back, but I found that the holes in that netting were way too large. So I went to a plant nursery, and the lady there recommended pool netting, which has smaller holes and comes in various sizes. After stretching the netting over the strawberries (I also use it for blueberries), I anchor the edges with good-sized rocks. Since the netting is too wide for my strawberry bed I double it. No critters get underneath.

E. A. Smith
Downing, Missouri

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A photograph of three bottles of Organic Valley Live Organic Lowfat Yogurt. The bottles are labeled Vanilla (orange), Plain (blue), and Berry (purple). Each bottle has a green cap and a USDA Organic seal. To the right, a white bowl of cereal is shown with white yogurt being poured over it from a small white pitcher. The background is a soft-focus green and white.



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Curb Appeal

Kudos on the February/March story "No Lawn, Just Food" (Design Like a Pro). I live on 1 1/2 acres; I have a small back yard and a very large front yard that I garden in. I have had several comments asking why I would put my vegetable garden in my front yard. My answer is that it provides food for my family and keeps me happy. Neighbors walk by and I can chat with them while gardening.

Marsha Jakubiak
Amherst Junction, Wisconsin

Squash Search

We found your article about ornamental winter squash (November-January) very interesting, and we agree that we want to grow 'Muskadee de Provence', 'Marinade Chioggia', and 'Zucchini Rampicante' in our next garden. Only one problem: Our favorite catalog, Johnny's Selected Seeds, doesn't carry the latter. So here's the question: Do you know any that do? If you do, tell us. Thank you.

Caleb Goldberg, age 9
Louisville, Kentucky

So happy to hear of your interest in ornamental squash. Caleb! Pickle Creek Heirloom Seeds (317-924-8917) www.pickledseeds.com/ carries 'Zucchini Rampicante'.

Homemade Butter

I read with interest your article on butter making (February/March). Back in the 1940s during the Second World War, there was a so-called shortage of butter. When a local supermarket finally had butter, someone would come into the neighborhood and yell, "The A&P has butter!" and soon the whole neighborhood would be seen running to the market. I said to my mother, "Why can't we go to the dairy and buy some heavy cream and make our own butter with your electric mixer?" We did, and after that we had all the butter we needed without going to the market.

Norman J. Hochella
Stow, Massachusetts

Al Gore Yes

We have grown up, raised our children (almost), and found our various pieces of paradise. We are ready to participate in the tasks at hand (our planet and the rejuvenation and responsibility thereof). The Al Gore piece (February/March) was great, and how my parents can't get on board with that is a mystery to me! The whole issue was perfectly wonderful. Direction is what we all need now. What to do, buy, reuse, recycle, and, of course, grow. Thank you for resurfacing in our lives once again.

Kimberly Childers
Santa Rosa, California



Our February/March issue generated many letters, some responding to our story about growing vegetables in the front yard, left.

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Al Gore No

You have disgraced your pages with this article about an individual who has gained the public and made millions of dollars creating a totally bogus crisis. How stupid and/or sinister can one person be to generate such fear in the populace over a now-discredited myth. I am not going to ask for my money back or cancel my subscription (that would be childish). But there is a universe of reasons for warmer temperatures. We are in the midst of a solar minimum with low solar wind action, which is causing cooling. In about 6 years, we will cycle into a solar maximum cycle and temps will rise and so on. It is the height of arrogance to think that mankind can adversely affect this planet.

Dennis Sheridon TSgt, USAF Ret.
Tillamook, Oregon

From the Editor to Chief

I would like to thank the readers who responded to my profile of Al Gore. Many were "for," some "against." Discussion and debate, politics and environment have had a role in gardening for centuries. Certainly, J.I. and Bob Rodale were no strangers to dissent and went to the mat to defend their publications. And Maria Rodale's latest book tells us where she stands.

We have not changed, and to those who feel we have somehow stepped outside the bounds of journalistic responsibility, I would point out that since 1942, Rodale has advocated a return to natural methods of agriculture and horticulture precisely because we believe that to do otherwise will, indeed, adversely affect this planet.

Compliments...

I really like the new magazine size. I have just about every issue from 1973 till now; it's fun to show people how you have changed over the years. Keep up the good work; someday the world will see the light.

Rick Ellis
Lisbon, Ohio

I want to compliment you on the new look of Organic Gardening. From the superclean paper stock to the intriguing page size and everything in between, it creates quite a nice splash. I was born and raised in a south Pittsburgh suburb and practiced organic gardening back then, as a kid, without knowing that's what it was. Now I live in a rural high-mountain town northeast of Los Angeles and continue the same practices, though with a lot more organic preaching now that 40-plus years have passed and people are waking up. Anyway, good job on the redesign. Nice way to start the new year!

Dr. Edwin M. Evans
Via email

... And Complaints

I'm especially glad to receive Organic Gardening in the winter months and have found that the articles lately have been very interesting. However, I don't like the new size of the magazine. It doesn't fit in the files I keep my copies in, and I find it harder to hold to read. Keep up the good work, but go back to the old magazine size, please!

Carol McSheehy
Via email

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LETTERS

Spider-Mite Fight

Regarding "Two-Spotted Spider Mite" (Good Bug, Bad Bug, February/March): I have not had very good luck using insecticidal soap to control mites. Organic horticultural oils that use plant extracts seem to work much better than soap.

Jenny Adams
Treasurer, Washington

Organic, but Not Local

"Eat Your Foudshed" (Common Ground, February/March) made a timely appearance at our home. My husband had recently purchased bagged organic spinach. It wasn't until he got it home that he read where it was grown: China. I've since discovered that several other countries are enthused about the growing market for organic

produce. We used to think organic and locally grown were closely tied; now we'll be more careful. We are also hoping that Americans become more enthused about organic farms. We should be able to produce our own quality food and eliminate the environmental impact of shipping.

ജനകീയ
സംസ്ഥാനം

**Correction to February/March
letter regarding pressure canning**

We received numerous emails and letters questioning the advice in a letter we printed about pressure canning (Letters, February/March), so for clarification, we contacted Elizabeth Andrews, Ph.D., extension food safety specialist at the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) at the University of Georgia. She replied:

*Pressure canning is the only safe way to can low-acid foods at home. These include meats, poultry, seafood, vegetables, beans, soup mixes, and combinations of these types of foods. There are no science-based safe processes for canning these foods at home at atmospheric boiling temperatures. The pressure canner raises the temperature inside the canner well above boiling, so that reasonable process (canning) times can be achieved in these low-acid foods in order to destroy the heat-resistant spores of *Clostridium botulinum*, found naturally in the environment and on some foods. If the spores survive, the conditions inside a vacuum-sealed jar or can of moist, low-acid food stored at room temperature encourage them to grow and produce a potentially fatal poison (botulinum toxin, commonly called botulism).

"There are some optional pressure-canning choices for acid foods for those who prefer that method to boiling-water canning. So, pressure canners are indeed recommended and even required for many types of home canning."

We apologize for the error and refer readers to the NCHFP website www.nchfp.org for more information.

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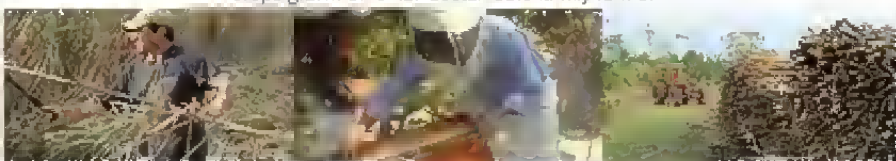


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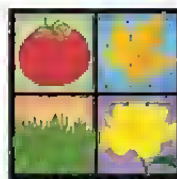
LETTERS

Send us your tips

Share your garden tips with fellow readers by emailing them to us at org@rodale.com

or mail to Organic Gardening Editors,
33 E. Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098.

Be sure to include your mailing address, email address, and telephone number. Submissions, including photos and illustrations, should be your original work and no more than 100 words. Submissions will become the property of Rodale, and cannot be returned. The reader tips that appear here haven't been tested by us, so we can't guarantee that they will work in every garden. But we do our best to screen out anything we think might be harmful.



The selected "We Love This Tip!" will receive an award package from Bradfield Organics that includes a selection of their organic garden-care products.

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No purchase necessary to enter and a purchase will not improve your chance at selection. Void where prohibited. Must be over 18 and legal resident of 49 US or DC (EXCLUDING RESIDENTS OF AZ) or Canada (EXCLUDING RESIDENTS OF PROVINCE OF QUEBEC). For official rules, go to OrganicGardening.com/readerip. Rodale Inc., 33 E. Minor St., Emmaus, PA 18098-0099, and Bradfield Organics, PO Box 19798, Brentwood, MO 63144, are the operators. Organic Gardening will select the tip to receive the award based on the following: (1) effectiveness and insightfulness of the gardening-related tip or advice; and (2) adherence to the word-count limitation. The decision of the Editor in Chief of Organic Gardening is final.

Planting Personality

Designer: C. Elaine Brubaker

Tiny front yards are a challenge, landscape architect C. Elaine Brubaker says, because every square inch will be seen at close range. "The smaller the space, the more you will notice each detail," she says. "Larger spaces can be more forgiving." Six years ago, Brubaker began a redesign of her Minneapolis front yard, which measures only 40 by 20 feet. She was determined to craft a new landscape that better suited her lifestyle and her home's Craftsman architecture.

"Most people think the front yard means a row of shrubs along the foundation and a lawn," Brubaker says, and indeed, that was the starting point for her redesign. For years, Brubaker had designed and built innovative entry gardens for her clients, all the while hesitating to forgo her own traditional expanse of turf, which served her well for everything from yard sales to Halloween festivities.

But the predictable lawn violated one of Brubaker's design principles: "A good landscape tells the story of the place and the people who live in it," she says. In her new front yard, an area to sit with friends speaks of her social disposition; abundant plants reveal her love of nature. The inclusion of easy-care plants and strategies for reducing maintenance, such as planting densely to squeeze out weeds, indicates that she's a busy professional without a lot of time to fuss over a demanding garden.



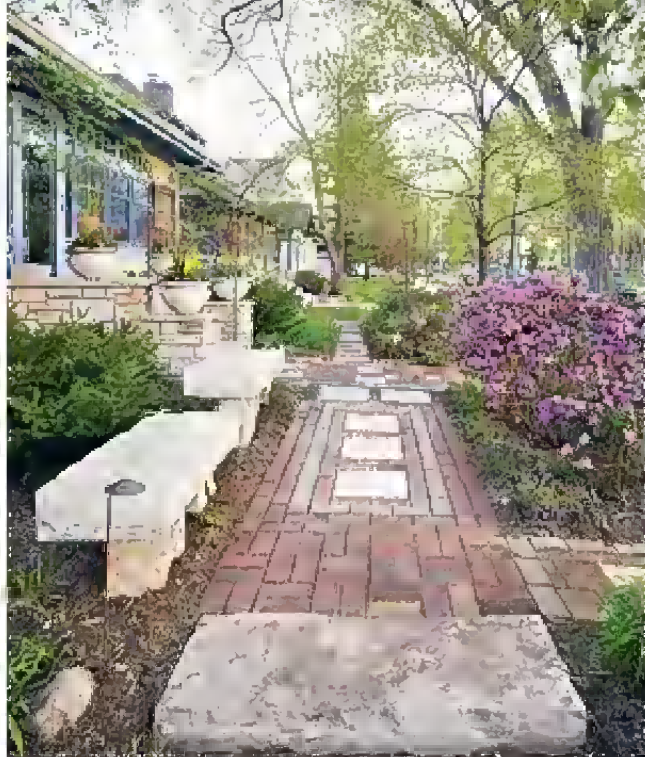
The walk leading to the porch divides the front yard into halves, which Brubaker planted in distinct styles. On the left, rhododendrons and serviceberries are aligned and evenly spaced, creating a sense of order. On the right, shade perennials mingle in a naturalistic manner under a red maple tree, and the ground is sculpted to create slight variations in topography. Even in a small yard, there's room to contrast styles, she says, as long as there is consistency of materials and plants.

The criteria Brubaker considered as she planned her front yard are helpful to anyone taking on a landscaping project:

Circulation. An entry garden requires paved pathways, sensibly placed to allow people to move from one spot to another. A cross-axis path connecting the property with neighboring ones is especially helpful. "If you don't create one, the delivery people are going to make a path of their own," Brubaker says. Also, she left a strip of turf next to the street for people alighting from parked cars. She chose a "no-mow" blend of low-growing fescue grasses that needs to be trimmed just once a year.

Social spaces. Within this small space, Brubaker included places to sit. Near the curb, an informal line of boulders defines the

In early spring, as perennials awaken, 'P.J.M. Compact' rhododendrons and bulbs in pots bring a splash of color to a landscape that is planned primarily to showcase plant textures and forms, not flowers.



garden's boundary while also providing casual perches for passers-by. Closer to the house are two limestone benches. **Matching materials.** Repeated use of granite, clay pavers, and limestone gives the garden a cohesive look. Limestone is employed not only as a paving material but also in the benches, sculptural house numbers, and front steps. Urns flanking the steps are a durable composite of concrete and fiber, finished to look like limestone. **Four-season presence.** Evergreen rhododendrons and Thupton spreading yews join deciduous shrubs and trees to establish the landscape's year-round framework. Many of the perennials bloom during the growing season, but Brubaker considers floral color to be a bonus to her primary goal of composing with textures and forms. "If you want color, put it in your containers," she advises. —*Jong Hall*

Three paving materials are arranged in a ruglike pattern in C. Elaine Brubaker's "patiwalk"—a term she coined to describe an area that combines characteristics of a small patio and a walkway. A pair of limestone benches accommodates neighborly conversations.

For more information, see *Find It Here*, page 91.

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Bang for your buck

'Moonlight' Japanese Climbing Hydrangea
(*S. bicolor, ssp. hydrangoides* 'Moonlight')

- Multiseason interest
- Manageable growth
- Few pests or diseases
- Part to full shade
- Zones 5 to 9

A close relative of true climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris*), 'Moonlight' Japanese climbing hydrangea is a self-clinging, deciduous vine. Using adhesive rootlets borne along its stems, it can climb a masonry wall or a tree without harming or overwhelming its support. In fall, the leaves turn from lime green to yellow before dropping to reveal a scaffold of reddish brown woody stems. The young foliage, however, is like a full moon on a clear night; the heart-shaped leaves, 3 to 5 inches across, have a silvery sheen accented with dark green veins. Creamy, scented, lacecap blooms appear in summer for 6 to 8 weeks. 'Moonlight' prefers well-drained soil with average moisture in dappled sun to full shade. Although slow to start, it will eventually reach 20 or 30 feet.



Save your cents

Japanese wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*)

- Difficult to contain
- Self-sows freely
- Escaped from cultivation
- Full sun
- Zones 5 to 9

Here is yet another vegetative case of too much of a good thing turning out to be very, very bad. Japanese wisteria is prized for its spring display of dramatic racemes of fragrant purple or white blossoms and luxuriant foliage. But don't be fooled by its beauty; unless religiously pruned, its rampant growth—to as much as 65 feet—reveals it as a thug. Freely self-sown seedlings have invaded natural areas, where the strong vining stems rapidly shade out, smother, and strangle other plants. All but the sturdiest garden structures eventually collapse under the weight of a mature plant. Japanese wisteria is finicky about blooming, and plagued by numerous pests and diseases (which disfigure the leaves but don't slow its growth one iota). This exotic, however beautiful its brief burst of flowering may be, can prove too much for gardens (or gardeners) to accommodate. —Lorene Edwards Faraker



Sacred Seeds

Want to do your part to preserve biodiversity? Plant a garden of medicinal herbs.

Medicinal herbs—life-sustaining plants that provide a first line of medical care in developing countries, besides inspiring many modern pharmaceuticals—are in peril. These herbal treasures face possible extinction from global climate change, loss of habitat, and overharvesting. As the CEO of New Chapter, one of the world's leading formulators of dietary supplements and herbal formulations from certified-organic ingredients, I'm a witness to this alarming loss of biological diversity.

A study by Botanic Gardens Conservation International found that many of the 70,000 currently known medicinal plant species are at risk. Some experts advocate seed banks as the best way to protect imperiled life on our planet. Although seed banks certainly have value and should be supported, they have limitations:

- Seeds in a bank may be frozen, but the environment is not. Dramatic climate change will severely stress a plant's adaptive capabilities, and a frozen seed bank won't tell us if plants can handle that challenge.

- Seed banks can protect only a limited number of species; many tropical seeds, for example, cannot be preserved by freezing. And we don't know how long frozen seeds can remain viable. To have a chance of protecting biodiversity, we will need living sanctuaries of useful plants in thousands of ecosystems. That might give us the breadth and flexibility necessary to begin the great task of protecting life on the planet.

- Finally, while the seeds lie frozen, healing traditions will still be disappearing.

Organic gardeners and gardeners can complement seed bank efforts, and with this in mind, I established the Sacred Seeds project, administered by the William L. Brown Center at the Missouri Botanical Garden. In Costa Rica at Finca Luna Nueva ("new moon farm"), New Chapter's biodynamic farm, we have created the Semillas Sagradas ("sacred seeds") Sanctuary, dedicated to protecting medicinal plants of the neotropics. I'm proud that Semillas Sagradas is one of the New World's most comprehensive collections of medicinal herbs. Come visit us! Finca Luna Nueva offers an ecot lodge and conference center in a rainforest paradise.

Wherever you live, you are part of a unique ecosystem. Seasonal rhythms, the region's elevation, rainfall, soil conditions, fauna, and the history of traditional medicine all contribute to an expression of biodiversity that deserves to be protected. I encourage you to plant a Sacred Seeds garden that includes food crops and medicinal herbs that were significant to the indigenous populations of your region, as well as the plants that sustained your ancestors. Once you've established your garden, please consider yourself a Seedling—a founding participant in this movement to save earth's biodiversity and the traditional medical knowledge that sustains us. —Tom Newmark

For more information, see *Find It Here* on page 91.

*Some of the earliest gardening books were herbals, like this facsimile copy of John Parkinson's 17th-century *Paradisus in Sole*, *Paradisus Terrestres*. Herbals serve to remind us that the earliest gardens were physic gardens, where plants were grown exclusively for their medicinal value and for physicians to study and learn to identify. This page shows foxglove (*Digitalis*), camaro, canna lily, and the mythically charged mandarin.*



YOU HAVE THE POWER TO PROTECT OUR SEED HERITAGE

Join the Sacred Seeds Challenge

with New Chapter and *Organic Gardening*

Global climate change, loss of habitat, aggressive agricultural practices, pollution, over-harvesting and the loss of generational medicinal wisdom are threatening our culturally and scientifically significant plant species, and the medicinal wisdom that surrounds them. Without intervention, we could be facing a dramatic global loss of biodiversity.

Semillas Sagradas

In response, New Chapter and the William L. Brown Center at the Missouri Botanical Garden have joined together to create the Sacred Seeds project, a world-wide network of seed sanctuaries devoted to preserving biodiversity and plant knowledge.



Image courtesy: The World from

The first Sacred Seeds Project garden was established at Luna Nuevo, New Chapter's organic and Biodynamic® rainforest education center and Ecotodge in Costa Rica. The garden contains over 250 traditionally important plant species, and serves to protect and celebrate the biological diversity and cultural knowledge of these plants in Costa Rica and worldwide. Dedicated to protecting endangered medicinal plants of the neotropics, this sanctuary is one of the world's largest and most comprehensive sanctuaries for endangered plant species.

Join the Challenge

The roots of Sacred Seeds have taken hold, and with the guidance of the William L. Brown Center at the Missouri Botanical Garden, Sacred Seeds Sanctuaries have been established all over the world, including Vietnam, Peru, and Madagascar. Because organic gardens and gardeners are a key part of the answer to protecting traditional medicinal seed heritage, *Organic Gardening* is pleased to offer our readers an exciting new opportunity to take part in the Sacred Seeds project to establish 10,000 Sacred Seeds gardens globally.

Participation is simple

- Study your region's herbal history—the herbs and foods that native people and your ancestors relied on to sustain health.
- Plant them and tell us about it.
- Visit OrganicGardening.com/SacredSeedsChallenge to register your garden, gain valuable regional plant information, read about other seed sanctuaries, and share knowledge with forum members.
- Share your Sacred Seeds story with us to be entered to win one of four trips for two to New Chapter's Luna Nuevo organic farm in Costa Rica in July 2011.

Be part of the solution by joining the Sacred Seeds Challenge—and partner with citizens world-wide in the movement to save earth's biodiversity and the traditional medicinal knowledge that sustains us all.

Enter the Sacred Seeds CHALLENGE

Every family has their own Sacred Seeds story. Some families preserve seeds from their harvest and pass them from generation to generation to use in preparing a cherished family recipe. Other families grow herbs to be used in their family's own medicinal remedies. We want to hear your family's story.

Visit OrganicGardening.com/SacredSeedsChallenge and tell us your Sacred Seeds story in 250 words or less. Include photos related to your story, or tell us your story in a 3 minute video segment. Entries must be received by October 1, 2010, and will be judged on creativity, originality, relevance and clarity. The top 4 winners will win a trip for 2 to New Chapter's Luna Nuevo organic farm in Costa Rica in July 2011. Winning stories will also be profiled in our February/March 2011 issue.

ENTER TO WIN

All expenses paid. 5 day/4 night, trip for 2 to Finca Luna Nuevo lodge, a certified organic and Biodynamic® spice estate in the heart of the Costa Rican rainforest. Spend 4 nights at the beautiful facilities located just miles from Arenal Volcano. While on the trip you will have the opportunity to experience first-hand how organic gardening can preserve critical biodiversity.



Rules

No purchase necessary to enter or win. A purchase will not improve your chances of winning. Void where prohibited. Contest begins at 12:01 a.m. ET on March 1, 2010 and ends at 11:59 p.m. ET on October 1, 2010. Contest open legal residents 49 United States & DC (excluding residents of AZ) and Canada (excluding residence of Province of Quebec) who are over 18. Visit www.organicgardening.com/seeds for official rules. Rodale Inc., 33 East Main Street, Emmaus, PA 18098-0099, is the operator of the Contest. The editors of *Organic Gardening* magazine, representatives of New Chapter, the Missouri Botanical Garden and the New York Botanical Garden shall select the winner of the Contest based on creativity of submission, relevance to the topic, and originality.

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The Color Purple

Purple carrots aren't simply a novelty. Their unique color reflects their healthy phytochemical constituents. Not only does 'Purple Haze' have the vitamin A and beta-carotene of ordinary carrots—evident in its orange center—it's also rich in anthocyanins, the antioxidant compounds that give blueberries their distinctive color and superfood health benefits. Studies have found that these blue and purple pigments can improve memory, enhance vision, protect against heart attacks, act as anti-inflammatories, and even help control weight.

'Purple Haze' mirrors the original color of carrots cultivated in Afghanistan 5,000 years ago. It grows well in most zones but prefers soil temperatures of 55°F to 68°F to create its spectacular purple skin. Otherwise grow as for other imperator (tapering) carrots. 'Purple Haze' matures in 65 to 70 days. Pull the roots (wet the ground to make harvest easier) when the shoulders are deep purple.

In cold climates, carrots can be left in the ground even through winter, beneath a deep mulch of hay or straw. In warm climates, however, carrots left in the ground are vulnerable to insect pests, so it is best to make successional sowings and harvest carrots as they mature. Store them in the refrigerator, in a plastic bag, with the foliage trimmed off. Don't store them near apples or pears, which give off gases that turn carrots bitter. —*Denise Foley*



Cooking Suggestions

'Purple Haze' carrots are sweet and delicious raw or cooked, but they lose much of their gorgeous color when boiled. For that reason, serve them fresh from the garden whenever possible. Slice 'Purple Haze' into medallions, mix with other colorful carrots, and serve with dill dip, or grate and toss with white cabbage and orange carrots for a colorful coleslaw. Coat whole or sliced carrots with a little olive oil, sprinkle with fresh or dried thyme, and roast until soft, which enhances their inherent sweetness. For a sweet side dish, sauté carrots lightly in olive oil and serve them with a maple glaze, for a savory twist, add yellow or purple onions that have been sautéed until soft.

Other Colorful Carrots

'Purple Dragon'. 65 to 70 days. 6 inches.

'Atomic Red'. 76 days. Rich in the anti-oxidant lycopene. 9 inches.

'Solar Yellow'. 63 days. Totally yellow, crunchy and sweet; high levels of lutein, which can improve eye health. 7 inches.

'Lunar White'. 60 days. Almost entirely coreless; has a mild flavor, especially when picked small. Crunchy. 8 inches.

For more information, see *Find It Here*, page 91.

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Herbal Tisanes

Herbal teas brewed from homegrown plants are a delicious way to enjoy the garden's bounty. These hor, aromatic infusions are sometimes called tisanes to distinguish them from teas brewed from the leaves of the tea plant, *Camellia sinensis*. Tisanes distill the flavors and fragrances of the garden—sometimes energizing, sometimes calming—in every steaming cup.

Plant a generous selection of aromatic herbs and harvest fresh leaves for tisanes during the growing season. For winter brewing, harvest and dry the leaves. With a bit of planning, your garden will serve up a variety of herbal tisanes throughout the year.

There are two processes for brewing herbal teas: infusion and decoction. Infusions are made by pouring boiling water over the fresh or dried leaves or flowers of herbs. For each cup of tea, use 1 to 2 teaspoons dried herbs or 2 to 3 teaspoons fresh herbs.

Mellow or spicy, invigorating or relaxing, hot or cold—herbal tisanes offer many flavorful choices.

Steep for 3 to 8 minutes to reach the strength desired, then strain. The other brewing process, decoction, is used for hard plant parts, such as seeds, roots, and twigs, that must be boiled to extract their flavors. Place the plant material and water in saucepan and bring to a boil; simmer for at least 10 minutes, then strain.

Spring

Early-spring gardening chores can bring aches and spasms to muscles that have been hibernating over the winter months. A hot cup of lavender-and-chamomile tea will relax the body after a long day in the garden. Lavender's fragrance has a soothing effect; chamomile is reputed to calm nerves and relax sore muscles.

To brew, place 1 teaspoon fresh or dried lavender flower buds and 1 teaspoon fresh or dried chamomile flowers in a teapot. Pour 1 cup boiling water over the flowers and steep, covered, for 5 to 8 minutes; strain. Sweeten if desired.

Summer

Relax in the shade on a hot day with a cup of cooling and energizing peppermint or spearmint tea. The menthol compound in mints invigorates the body, soothes the pain of a headache, and quells indigestion. Mint is delicious on its own or blended with other herbs. Use the leaves fresh, or dry them to enjoy year-round.

Elder flowers, rose petals, and mint, organically grown and freshly harvested, are a lovely combination. Place 1 teaspoon of each in a teapot and pour 1 cup boiling water over the herbs. Keep the brew covered to capture the delicate floral essence of the ingredients. Be sure to use only the flowers of the elder plant, as other parts are toxic.

Autumn

On the cool, damp days of autumn, a tea that combines gingerroot and lemon verbena warms the bones. The light, citrusy taste of lemon verbena pairs well with

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Organic Peaches & Cream *Cheesecake*

Crust

- 1 1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 2 tbsp. Florida Crystals® Organic Granulated Sugar
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

Filling

- 1 cup organic peaches, peeled and sliced (1-2 medium peaches)
- 3/4 cup Florida Crystals® Organic Granulated Sugar, divided
- 2 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese, softened
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla

Glazed Topping

- 1/2 cup Florida Crystals® Organic Granulated Sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tbsp. light corn syrup
- 2 cups organic peaches, peeled and sliced

Preheat oven to 350°F. In med. mix bowl, combine ingredients for crust, mix well. Press evenly into bottom of greased 8" spring-form pan. Bake 10 min. Remove from oven and cool. Leave oven on. Puree peaches and 1/4 cup of sugar in food processor until smooth, set aside. Beat cream cheese on medium speed, gradually adding remaining sugar until smooth. Add eggs one at a time. Beat until smooth. Add vanilla and pureed peaches. Gently blend well. Pour mixture into crumb crust. Place pan of hot water on the bottom rack of oven. Place cheesecake in oven center above water. Bake at 350°F for 1 hr. and 15-20 minutes or until set. Remove from oven, cool completely. Cover and chill.

Glazed Peach Topping

Combine sugar with water and corn syrup in a large skillet. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Boil 2-3 min. without stirring. Fold in peach slices, reduce heat and simmer 1-2 min. Do not overcook. Remove peaches from syrup and cool. Reserve syrup and hold at room temperature.

To serve, arrange peaches over top of cheesecake and drizzle with reserved syrup.



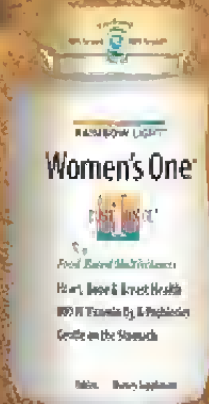
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FLOWER POWER

ginger's spicy flavor. Although ginger is a tropical plant, it is easy to grow in a pot that is moved to a sunny window indoors in winter.

To make a cup of the tea, place 1 teaspoon fresh lemon verbena leaves and 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger in a teapot. Add boiling water and steep for 8 to 10 minutes; longer steeping results in a more intense flavor. Sweeten to taste and enjoy hot or iced.

Winter

Gardeners have earned some time off in winter, so collect seed catalogs and dream about next year's garden while drinking a tisane brewed from dried herb leaves. Or challenge your green thumb and grow the South American tea plant, yerba mate (*Ilex paraguariensis*), as a houseplant. This is a holly species with evergreen leaves that are loaded with antioxidants and mild levels of caffeine. Traditionally, a hot beverage brewed from its dried and crushed leaves and stems is served in a hollow gourd and sipped with a metal straw that filters out the solids. Add 1 tablespoon of the dried leaves to a cup of hot, not boiling, water and steep for 5 to 8 minutes. —Eileen Weinsteiger

For more information, see [Find It Here](#) on page 91.

Herbal Sweetener

Stevia (*Stevia rebaudiana*) is a natural sweetener from Central and South America. One leaf of this calorie-free sugar substitute, fresh or dried, is enough to sweeten a cup of tea. A perennial, stevia is hardy to Zone 9; in colder zones, it is grown as an annual. Start it from seeds or transplants.

Brewing Favorites

Tisanes brewed from these herbs can be enjoyed for their aromas and flavors or for their mildly therapeutic effects. Many, including mint, bee balm, catnip, and lavender, are hardy perennials. Ginger and lemongrass are tender perennials that can be grown in containers in cold climates. American elder, roses, rosemary, and yerba mate are shrubs. Brew infusions from fresh or dried leaves unless otherwise noted.

Common Name	Botanical Name	Flavor	Comments
American elder (flowers)	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Fruity	Good for colds
Bee balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i>	Oregano-like	Good for colds
Catnip	<i>Nepeta catappa</i>	Aromatic	Calmng
Chamomile (flowers)	<i>Matricaria recutita</i>	Apple-like	Relaxing
Ginger (roots)	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Pungent, spicy	Aids digestion
Lavender (flowers)	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Floral	Soothing
Lemongrass	<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>	Citrusy	Aids digestion
Lemon verbena	<i>Aloysia biphylla</i>	Citrusy	Soothing
Peppermint	<i>Mentha x piperita</i>	Sweet, cool	Good for indigestion
Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Resinous	Reduces congestion
Rose (hips)	<i>Rosa</i> spp.	Tart	High in vitamin C
Rose (petals)	<i>Rosa</i> spp.	Floral	Relaxing
Yerba mate	<i>Ilex paraguariensis</i>	Mild tea, earthy	Mild stimulant

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Grow greens with
distinct flavors
for a livelier
salad bowl.

the salad equation

By Deborah L. Ewing — with recipes by Rob Cardillo

T

he salad I grew up with was assembled using simple arithmetic: 'Iceberg' lettuce plus tomato wedges equals tossed salad. Today, the flavorful array of salad greens available has multiplied the possibilities exponentially. Flipping open a seed catalog, I am tantalized by pages of lettuces and unusual salad greens offering glamorous looks and tastes from sweet to tangy to spicy. Suddenly there are more variables to the equation.



Growing my own salad greens gives me lots of flavor options. I can tailor my salads to who will be seated at the dinner table and the other dishes to be served. What's more, I know that homegrown salads are tastier and more nutritious than store-bought. But which varieties to grow? My advice: Start with a few selections of lettuce, then add flavorful greens to suit your palate. Vary the colors and textures, and you're ready to toss.

Start with Lettuce

The wealth of lettuce varieties can be divided into ones that are soft and those that are crisp. I love the soft lettuces, especially the oakleaf and butterhead types. Sweet and creamy, like tissue on the tongue, these include 'Mascara', a red oakleaf lettuce that glows in the garden. 'Flashy Butter Oak' is a dramatic combination of red-spattered oak-shaped leaves folded around sweet, buttery hearts. Looseleaf lettuces are known for their large fluttery leaves. 'Red Sails' is a good looseleaf for summer salads because it lasts longer in hot weather without bolting, or going to seed.

In contrast to these tender-leaved types, the romaines and summer crisps, also called French crisps or batavians, provide crunch and succulence. Green romaines can grow large and stout, with 'Braveheart' offering good lettuce flavor. The smaller red romaine varieties, such as 'Breen', provide dazzling color. Summer crisp

Chickpeas, pita chips, and feta cheese add protein to a bowl of green and red lettuce. Cucumbers, cherry and 'Green Zebra' tomatoes, and thin slices of red onion complete the salad.



lettuces are refreshingly sweet, with thick, frilly leaves packed tightly into juicy heads that can tolerate hotter weather.

Add Flavors

Including greens of different flavors adds variety to the salad equation. Because some greens like cool conditions while others can take the heat, they also reflect the season.

Mild. Spinach lends a familiar sweet flavor to salads, as do young beet and chard leaves. Chard varieties have a bonus: ribs and stems of white, red, yellow, or hot pink. Kale leaves are sweet and tender when picked young. Don't forget cabbage as a salad ingredient; delicate savoy cabbage, Chinese cabbage, and bok choy contribute both flavor and crunch.

Some mild greens are particular about the season. In cool temperatures, I grow orach (*Atriplex hortensis*), tatsoi, miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*), and mâche (also known as corn salad or lamb's lettuce). The following greens like hot weather: amaranth greens (*Amaranthus tricolor*), New Zealand spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*), Malabar spinach (*Basella alba*), and purslane (*Portulaca oleracea* var. *sativa*).

Hot and spicy. The cresses, including curly cress and 'Wrinkled Crinkled Crumpled' cress, add a sweet pepperiness. Mustards provide a wide range of heat, from the pleasant 'Tendergreen' to the spicy 'Red Giant', which gets stronger as it bolts. The lacy mizuna's degree of zest depends on the variety grown and youthfulness of the leaves. Young radish greens also add a mustardy tone. Choose radish varieties with smoother leaves, like 'Shunkyo Semi-Long' or 'White Icicle'.

Bitter. Chopped into small pieces and sprinkled into the salad sparingly, a few bitter greens add unexpected pizzazz. Plus, they're beautiful. Crunchy radicchio leaves offer paintbrush swipes of red. Curly endive or frisée, like deeply fringed lettuce with a crisp heart, brings its refreshing sharpness to the salad bowl. Italian dandelion—really a chicory—has long, strappy leaves. The small, bitter leaves gleaned from stalks of bolting lettuces bring a flavorful spark to bowls of blander greens.

Distrinctive tastes. Some greens defy categorizing. No salad of mine is complete without arugula. Its characteristic nutty spiciness is mild when young, increasing in strength with maturity. Young shungiku (*Chrysanthemum coronarium*) leaves add a flowery essence. Cilantro is generally considered an herb, but I use it liberally like a vegetable.

Toss in fresh herbs by the handful. Lemony ones include sorrel, lemon thyme, and lemon basil. Basils vary in color, leaf size, and



Top: Purple-leaved tatsoi, left, and marbled radicchio, right, demonstrate that not all salad "greens" are green. **Middle:** 'Tom Thumb' mini-butterhead lettuce, is planted in the style of a quincunx, a space-saving grid of staggered rows. **Bottom:** 'Red Russian,' left, is an extra-tender variety of kale that's ideal for salads. 'Orion' Swiss chard, right, displays brilliant leaf ribs.

flavor, with different varieties offering citrus, cinnamon, and anise undertones. Mints have similar variations in flavor and form. Don't forget chives, parsley, cutting celery, tarragon, and bronze fennel.

Growing Considerations

One way of adding diversity to the salad bowl is to plant mesclun, a traditional seed mix that incorporates greens and herbs. I prefer to grow each salad ingredient separately, then combine them in the kitchen. Sow seeds directly in the garden in rows or beds when the soil temperature is conducive to germination, or start them indoors in pots. Many cool-season greens germinate best in cool soil. On the other hand, delay the planting of heat lovers, such as basil and arugula, until after the last frost date.

For a continual harvest of young, fresh greens, plant small amounts every 2 or 3 weeks. Most greens like sun (although lettuce prefers a half-day of shade once hot weather arrives). Steady moisture and fertile, well-drained soil promote quick growth, which results in tender leaves of the highest quality. Drip irrigation or soaker hoses help maintain even soil moisture and are recommended for hot areas. A 2-inch layer of loose mulch, such as straw, serves three purposes: It suppresses weeds, it keeps the soil cool and moist, and it prevents mud from splattering the leaves.

Extend the growing season into early spring and late fall with row covers for cold-weather protection. Summer heat, however, is the factor that is most likely to limit the harvest of lettuce and other cool-season greens. As the weather heats up and days lengthen, lettuce loses its mild flavor and becomes increasingly bitter. For summer harvest, select heat-tolerant varieties and protect them from afternoon sun with shade cloth. Or sow greens for summer harvest between rows of sweet corn or tomatoes, where the taller plants provide some protective shade. There are limits: Even the most heat-tolerant lettuce variety won't taste good when the temperature exceeds 90°F.

Harvest and Chill

Some people like their salad leaves really small, each leaf no larger than the bowl of a spoon. I prefer them about the size of my palm but no larger than my hand, when they are more flavorful and have developed their personalities.

Cut whole plants of headed lettuces, radicchio, and small greens like miche. To harvest nonheading greens, snip leaves individually with scissors; more will grow back. Save thinnings of greens growing too close together for the salad bowl, too. And try the flower buds! Spring kale buds are exceptionally sweet, arugula buds quite hot.

Immediately soak the harvest for a few minutes in cold water. Scoop out any debris with a strainer. Shake water droplets from the leaves (or use a salad spinner), then use the greens immediately or mill them gently in a dry paper towel and seal them in plastic bags. Greens stay fresh in the refrigerator for up to a week. ♥

For more information, see [Fluid #1](#) Here on page 91.

Green and red grapes, Marcona almonds, 'Granny Smith' apples, pumplin' seeds, and Manchego cheese entice in a bowl of mild, frilly lettuces.



Finishing Touches

Blend greens to meet your fancy, then consider these additions.

Dressing. A mild dressing with delicate flavors needs mild greens to stand out. Stronger dressings, like a pure oil with balsamic vinegar, can showcase the natural flavors of a spicy salad.

Cheese. Add cheeses that grate or crumble well. Soft Gruyère is a good match for butter lettuce. Strong and salty feta, Parmesan, and blue cheeses offset the spiciness of arugula and mustards.

Fruit. Soft fruits, such as pears, strawberries, and peaches, are appropriate additions in a salad of soft greens. The sweetness of fruit can offset stronger flavors or be the focus of a mild salad.

Edible flower petals. For a visual spark, experiment with blossoms of calendula, borago, gladiolus, daisy, squash, pea, bean, nasturtium, and 'Lemon Gem' marigold. Using only the petals, toss with the greens or sprinkle on top.

Straw mulch helps keep soil constantly moist—the key to quick, tender growth—for this 'Flashy Butter Oak' lettuce.



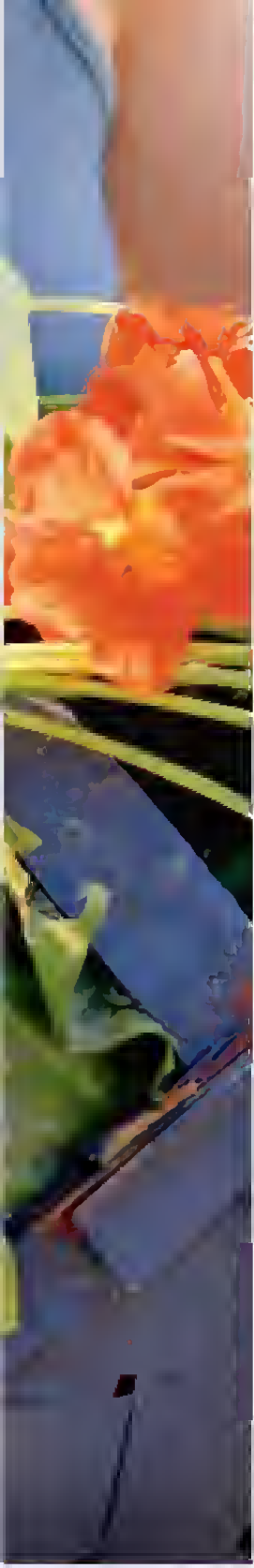


A beginning
gardener's
ingenuity turns
\$75 into
6 months
of fresh
vegetables.

LESS *is* MORE

By Sharon Tregaskis
Photographs by Matthew Benson





Last year, my partner and I became new homeowners, buying a house and a few acres of farmland in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. We had ambition and creativity, but since we were also transitioning from two paychecks to one, cash was tight. So in early February, we set a goal of spending no more than \$75 to grow, buy, or barter an entire season of fresh, local, organic vegetables. Could it be done? Yes, and then some. Ultimately, our scheme yielded as much in new friendships, burdened muscles, and lessons learned as it did in the produce we harvested. In our season of (admittedly, self-imposed) limits, we discovered that abundance comes in many guises.

February 12

It's rained all week, pooling atop a sheet of ice in the back yard. The snowdrops are budding. I've already arranged my first freebie, courtesy of Craigslist. A woman too pregnant to dig seeks help dividing her iris and strawberry beds. I will supply the labor and in turn help myself to unlimited rhizomes and runners. We'll arrange the details in April. Meanwhile, I'm inspired to inventory our perennials and post a barter offer of my own.

The beds of the neglected vegetable garden are in rough shape: The rich soil has been overrun by weeds and saplings, some taller than I am, while the borders around the raised beds have decomposed. We have our work cut out for us.

I've alerted friends to our budget scheme; they're already sharing information. One who took the Cooperative Extension beginning-gardener class last year reports a free seed cabinet stocked with donations from the big companies and local seed savers. Any county resident may take up to 12 packets. And an eco-boutique downtown has posted flyers for monthly gardening classes; I've inquired whether they'll host a seed swap. I hope to expand our seed inventory and meet some like-minded gardeners.

March 14

Today was beautiful: a clear, blue sky, bright sunshine, and temperatures warm enough to shed our winter layers here in Zone 5. A pair of hawks, hoping we might flush a rodent, wheeled overhead. We borrowed a truck and trailer this morning, and retrieved—free—15 cubic yards of mostly composted horse manure. This was the week for online offers from people cleaning out their barns, so I made a deal with the one right for us: herbicide-free feed, a farm both near our house and that of the friends lending us their truck and trailer, even help loading from the generous horsewoman sharing her wealth.

This afternoon, we placed the trunks of quaking aspens thinned from an overgrown corner of the yard as borders for the raised beds. The result fits our rustic-chic aesthetic and spares the hassle and costs of store-bought lumber. To suppress weeds, we've sheet-mulched the footpaths with cardboard salvaged from the grocery store, topped with several inches of wood mulch from the town pile. Mounds of emerging daffodils, daylilies, puppies, and tulips abound, including in spots we plan to double-dig for vegetables. I'll offer those to the people who responded to my online perennial barter offer. It's starting to look

Opposite, top left: Clothespins nailed to a scrap of pallet wood keep gloves organized and dry.

Left: An experiment in thrift yielded almost 800 pounds of produce.



Penny Pinching Tips

- **Go online.** Visit OrganicGardening.com's seed-swap forum. Craigslist has free, barter, and farm-garden categories where anything from mulch to seedlings, even lawn tools, finds a new home fast. On Freecycle.org, everything is free.
- **Or check the local Cooperative Extension** for free seed. Host an exchange.
- **Barter and trade with friends and coworkers.** Get creative: bake a cake or babysit in exchange for help planting a tree or for the loan of a truck.
- **Scavenge your land or neighborhood.** Tree trunks can become the sides of a raised bed; branches and brush can be turned into trellises and plant supports.
- **The supermarket** usually has boxes and containers available for the asking.
- **Split the cost of expensive tools** or large seed orders with friends and neighbors.
- **Offer your labor or skills** to a local CSA or market farmer for seedlings or produce. Many CSAs offer free or discounted subscriptions in exchange for a certain number of hours of work.
- **Keep the giving cycle going.** Donate leftover seeds and materials to local schools, community gardens, or the Cooperative Extension, and your excess harvest to a food bank.





like a garden! Next weekend, we'll repay the trailer loan by helping our friends plant trees at their place.

April 3

The seed swap was a grand success. Two dozen participants traded seeds and garden talk for about 2 hours. Also fun: crafting my seed packets, and delivering leftovers from the event to the Cooperative Extension seed cabinet. Next year, I'll schedule the exchange for late winter, before everyone orders by mail. The local native-plant society holds its exchange on the winter solstice—great idea. Some of the catalogs offer bulk discounts; next year, we'll save cash with a group order.

April 19

Friends starting an organic farm invited us to a work party to plant 20,000 crowns of asparagus. We helped out for a few hours and came home with a dozen crowns to plant in our own garden. They're interspersed with the strawberries, and now we have a beautiful bed of perennial vegetables that we'll begin harvesting next year. Later this week, I'll help another farmer transplant her tomato seedlings from trays to pots; she's promised me gooseberries and my choice of mature seedlings, instead of cash.

May 3

This past weekend's rototilling extravaganza was brilliant. A friend of Mohawk descent has outgrown his community-garden plot and will work the soil on our land instead. He'll interplant heritage varieties of white corn with beans and pumpkins in the traditional Three Sisters style, along with tobacco, sunflowers, and vegetables for his family. He rented the largest rototiller available and coordinated the timing so we could take turns behind the beast. We supplied the fuel and extra hands to pick cocks. Running nearly dawn to dusk, we broke ground for his extensive gardens and ours, and when we ran out of steam, the neighbors took a turn in their

yard. I'm excited by this new partnership, and especially pleased that there was time and energy to clear several hundred square feet of lawn for flowers. The annual seeds I've collected will attract birds in view of the kitchen window, and Mom now has a bed into which she'll transplant the primroses, bleeding heart, balloon flower, and other perennials she divided years ago in anticipation of us one day settling into a home of our own.

May 15

If there's one thing I hate, it's mowing grass—and this house floats in a sea of the green stuff. Happily, my aggressive lawn-eradication plan looks like a winner. Friends of friends ripped a dozen mature yew bushes from in front of their foundation. We leaped at the chance to install them along a property line where we'd like a smidgen more privacy, then filled in among them with divisions from our overgrown hostas and forsythias we received in a daylily trade. An online post yielded a beautiful, mature bridal wreath spirea. I cut it back hard before digging it from the donor's yard and replaced it with the white lilac she had sought, a plug from a clump in desperate need of thinning at our place. A former colleague long ago offered bamboo and rhubarb from his gardens, and finally we can take him up on the offer. I've also transplanted several varieties of willow and strawberries, as well as hops, butterfly bush, purple coneflower, salvia, rudbeckia, black currants, blueberries, and horseradish, all free.

We're wary of overtaxing our well, so to nurse the newcomers through their first summer, we've relied heavily on free mulch from the town's mulch pile and, for the acid-loving plants, used grounds from the local coffee shop. We've also amassed an assortment of rain barrels, all cheap or free. One began as a pickle barrel (\$3 in a garage sale); others formerly held industrial dishwashing detergent at the local college's dining hall. Not pretty, but shielded from view by fast-growing vines and decanted

Opposite, top: "Curb alerts" are sometimes posted online; left: extension officers host seed exchanges and pot swaps for gardeners needing growing containers. Left: Horse farms often offer manure free for the hauling.





*One man's waste is
this garden's wealth.
The friendships
we made and the
knowledge we gained
taught us that
abundance comes in
many guises.*





into 3-gallon jugs discarded by the natural-foods co-op—which we store out of sight in the pouring shed—it's a rainwater collection system that works for us.

June 16

A small organic vegetable operation wants the excess hay from our fields, which is cut and baled free by a cattle farmer down the road who takes the bulk to feed his livestock over winter. The produce growers will suppress weeds in their garlic beds; in exchange, they've offered credit at their farm stand, which boasts honey and jam.

While we couldn't start seeds indoors ourselves this year, between the trades, some starts from the Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm we belong to (free because we're supplying our labor in exchange for the season's eats), and leftover seedlings from another friend planting veggies at our place, we've gotten a great jump on the season.

It's too early to know how my home-made fish emulsion works in the tomato beds. Dad supplied sunfish from his pond; I buried a few while planting seedlings and

fermented the remainder in a discarded 5-gallon bucket with lid, free from the co-op. The process is admittedly stinky, but so is store-bought, and this approach appeals to my do-it-yourself, get-it-for-free ethic.

June 26

Earlier this month, we transplanted a trio of hardy kiwi vines overwhelming their previous owner's tiny downtown yard. To raise the hand-hewn, post-and-beam arbor that will support the vines at our garden entrance, we invited friends to help. We supplied snacks and drinks and they supplied muscle, camaraderie, and laughter.

August 14

There's no better gift for a gardener than free labor. My cousin and her brood infused the garden with their energy and vision last week. The eldest transformed the sunflower patch outside the kitchen window into a destination by laying a winding path edged with rocks from the gardens, punctuated with divisions from around the yard and trade perennials I potted back in June. Row cover and old sheets will shield them from the hot sun at this inopportune time for transplanting. Soon, they will be a gorgeous legacy of her visit. The second-eldest built liners for the remaining garden beds with salvaged lumber, and the young ones collected seed for next year, including peas, garlic, and spring bulbs that had naturalized during the years of neglect before we arrived.

Heartbreaking, but inevitable: Our tomatoes and potatoes have late blight. It was reported locally in late June, and many here spent the July 4 weekend burning or bagging their infected plants. And yet, silver linings: Many weeks ago, we transformed the plastic and lumber bequeathed by friends who are leaving town into a pseudo-greenhouse. That partial protection from the summer's constant rain held infection at bay long enough that we have green tomatoes for jam and pickles. To save the 200 row feet of potatoes planted as part of an organic fingerling variety trial

Opposite, top: 'Mont Ada's' Italian pole beans from the seed exchange flourish on a trellis made from tree limbs and old rope.

Below: Coffee shops often give away used grounds for free. Wood scraps trimmed to a point make tidy markers. The grounds are used to amend the soil around blueberries.



What We Bought

Seeds	\$35.45
Row cover	\$12.00
Cover-crop seed	\$10.00
Rooting medium	\$7.55
Seed inoculant	\$5.49
Plastic pickle barrel	\$3.00
Hollyhock seedlings	\$1.25
Total	\$74.74

What We Grew

Here's what we harvested on our property:

Beans	4 pounds and remainder to seed for 2010
Beets	25 pounds
Cabbages	64 pounds
Carrots	10 pounds
Cherry tomatoes	5 pounds
Corn	10 pounds dry seed, 12 ears fresh
Cucumbers	25 pounds
Daikon	5 pounds
Eggplants	10 pounds
Flowers	1 or 2 bouquets cut every week
Green tomatoes	9 pounds
Horsemanish	A few leaves for sushi; harvest in 2010
Hot peppers	3 pounds
Kohlrabi	30 pounds
Leeks	20 pounds
Lettuce	10 pounds
Fodder radish	1 pound, plus seed
Potatoes	350 pounds
Purple-top turnips	30 pounds
Rhubarb	2 pies
Scallions	1 pound
Soybeans	1 pound as edamame
Spinach	3 pounds
Sunflowers	100 pounds to feed chickens, wild birds
Tomatillos	10 pounds
Winter squash	40 pounds
Total	About 706 pounds, plus our CSA share





that provided free seed, we cut and hagged their foliage. This should keep spores from moving into the soil and destroying the tubers. Harvest can wait. If we're lucky, we'll have potatoes for winter storage, as well as data for the trial.

September 30

Our first frost was 10 days ago. Yet, while harvesting kale and turnips yesterday at our CSA farm—which has provided a rich education in larger-scale organic farming techniques, great exercise, stimulating conversation, and hundreds of pounds of veggies since May—we learned that the gorgeous green tomatoes in their hoop house must make way for winter greens. I requested permission to glean, and in one hour this morning we picked several hundred pounds of fruit. More than half went to a program that provides CSA memberships for low-income families, augmented with cooking and nutrition classes. They'll organize a giveaway and class with a local chef. I'll trade and share what we kept, stock the pantry, and ripen some in newspaper for November salads. I've heard rumors of a defunct gleaners' network in the area; I plan to learn more.

November 4

We still have potatoes to dig and leeks we'll harvest into the New Year. The pantry, freezer, and root cellar promise good eating throughout the winter, and we haven't paid cash for produce since early May. Yet we still have much to learn. In September, we forgot to freeze our collected vetch seeds to kill bugs. Instead of a free winter cover crop, we had a startling October hatching. Our laying hens feasted on several heads of sunflowers, but the challenge of drying and storing 100 seedheads demands winter research.

Even so, our myriad trades and barbers have produced a generous harvest while the social connections we've made and the wisdom we've gained will yield for many seasons to come. We've already thrown down the gauntlet for 2010: all the food we can eat and give away from May to November, for less than \$25. ♦

Grandma's old straw hat provides the shade, and a basket from friends deerberating their house holds the harvest. Kat provided rodent control in exchange for catnip.

Roses come clean

An organic approach to rose care yields healthy, beautiful results.

By G. Michael Shoup





In the early days of the Antique Rose Emporium, a mail-order nursery I established in 1984, I made regular forays into cemeteries and abandoned farmsteads in search of forgotten roses. I joined a group of like-minded lovers of heritage plants, and together, we sought old roses that had survived for generations with little or no care. We called it “rose rustling,” and it yielded stem cuttings of many shirable and gardenworthy roses, sometimes identifiable but often of mysterious origin.

At the same time, the emporium’s nursery staff and I were developing a display garden outside our Brenham, Texas, retail center. Today that garden has expanded to 8 acres, enabling visitors to see heritage roses in landscape settings—part of our mission to promote these time-tested performers. The garden also affords the staff a creative outlet for exploring the habits and nuances of roses. We strive to make our display garden not only an educational resource but also a destination for tourists.

Initially, we struggled with maintenance—some varieties of roses lived up to their reputations of being petulant and difficult to grow—and were not always satisfied with the appearance of the garden or the performance of individual plants. Having seen roses thrive in places where they received virtually no care, I realized that not all roses are chemically dependent by necessity. With this in mind, we revised our approach to rose care and adopted a three-pronged strategy that has made all the difference. We now recommend that gardeners choose rose varieties that are naturally vigorous, maintain them organically, and interplant them with diverse companions. These three factors have allowed us to create a garden that defies the fussy reputation of roses—and is richly scented with the perfume of thousands of blossoms, not chemicals.

“Railey Red” roses and big mealy grass (Muhlenbergia lindheimeri) line the path to the historic chapel in the garden of the Antique Rose Emporium in Brenham, Texas.



*The days of us wearing nuke suits and spraying
with fungicides are over. And our roses are healthier.*

Choose the Right Roses

Roses are comprised of a vast number of distinct varieties. These include not only hundreds of modern roses but also hundreds of antique roses, or old garden roses, as they are also known. Due to centuries of tinkering by rose breeders, there are smaller groups or classes of roses within each of these larger groups. Individuals in each of the classes have differences in color, size, and form that lend them to a particular garden situation better than another even within the same group. Selecting the best rose for its spot in the landscape helps ensure the success of the garden in the long run. As an example, 'New Dawn' and 'Sombreuil' are both climbing roses, but they have different growth habits. The vigorous, high-flying canes of 'New Dawn' require a soaring arch, a gazebo, or other support of significant size. 'Sombreuil', on the other

hand, grows in a restrained, mannerly fashion, making it appropriate to adorn an 8-foot pillar. Selection determines success.

As important as a variety's aesthetic contribution is its ability to remain healthy. Modern hybrid teas produce beautiful cut flowers, but their maintenance needs are high, and their lanky, upright growth habit can be difficult to integrate into a garden. In our gardens, most hybrid teas are short-lived plants that are eventually relegated to the compost heap. Antique roses, in contrast, tend to have a healthier constitution.

I prefer to grow the older roses for several reasons. They are resilient survivors, many living for years with a minimum of care, as I have discovered as a rose rustler. They are diverse in their shapes and growth habits, which makes them versatile in the garden. Their blossoms are lushly romantic. And they are often fragrant—

a beloved, evocative trait that many modern roses lack. I consider most antique roses to be the ultimate garden plant—the perfect brushstroke from the gardener's palette.

Embrace Nature's Ways

When we were establishing our display garden, applying the recommended 10-10-10 synthetic fertilizer to the roses was laborious and resulted in plants that became less and less vigorous over time. Weekly spray sessions of insecticides and fungicides did little to stop pest invasions; they were effective only at curtailing our enjoyment of gardening. One day, we spread several inches of bark mulch in part of the garden, and what happened next surprised us all: Plants in the mulched areas showed brighter and more vibrant leaves and were less affected by daily heat stress (no small consideration as our location is central Texas).



This realization caused us to rethink the way we grew roses, challenging the conventional chemical-intensive methods. Our bark mulch replicated nature's recycling of leaves and organic debris on the forest floor. In successive years, we replaced chemical inputs with a variety of organic regimens, all based on what we saw in the natural environment.

Nobody fertilizes the flora in nature, but it grows and thrives just the same. Could we rely on nature's techniques for supplying nutrients to plants instead of buying bags of fertilizer? As it turns out, twice-yearly applications of coarse hardwood bark mulch (2 to 3 inches in February and again in September) provide all the nutrition roses need. Beneficial organisms in the soil—certain fungi, bacteria, and nematodes—assist in breaking down the mulch and feed on carbon released during decomposition. Gardeners tend to think of these organisms in negative terms, and indeed, the microbes that cause bacterial crown gall and powdery mildew, among other rose maladies, are bad. But there are many more organisms that improve the

viability of plants through symbiotic relationships that make roots more efficient at seeking nutrients, or by converting soil nitrogen into forms that plant roots can absorb. Gardeners who are starting with nutrient-depleted soil might need to add a supplement of decomposed manure, compost, or other organic fertilizer to get the microbes rolling.

Brew Tea for Roses

In retrospect, it is hard to believe that we spent years destroying these microbial populations through our spraying program. A change as simple as adding mulch had improved the health of our plants, yet there was something even more magical— dare I say miraculous?—that evolved from this discovery. Elaine Ingham, Ph.D., a soil microbiologist from Oregon, introduced us to a revolutionary process of increasing beneficial soil organisms by aerating freshly leached compost tea. While traditional compost tea is brewed simply by suspending a "teabag" of compost in a bucket or barrel of standing water, the aerobic technique uses an air

pump to continually bubble oxygen through the liquid in a brew tank.

We followed Ingham's instructions, blending chlorine-free water, molasses (a food source for microbes), fish hydrolysate (ground fish carcasses, another food for fungi), humates (organic residues of decomposed plants or animals), and a handful of good compost to provide the initial microbial population. The air pump kept the mixture in a state of constant agitation and aeration.

According to Ingham's research, after 24 hours of aerobic brewing, the microbial population explodes exponentially. One milliliter (about one-fifth of a teaspoon) of aerobically brewed compost tea contains a trillion bacteria, representing 20,000 different species, and a much-increased fungal biomass—all multiplied from the initial organisms in the compost.

Left to right: Roses share the limelight with Texas native trees and shrubs in display beds. Knock Out, a stalwart shrub, sparkles with morning dew. A signpost points the way. Five-petaled roses embody the spirit of simple charm.



'Belinda's Dream'



'Caldwell Pink'

Researchers caution that molasses and other microbial foods used in brewing compost tea can boost the levels of pathogenic bacteria, such as salmonella and *Escherichia coli*. Because of this significant health concern, aerated compost tea should be used with care, and should not be used on food crops.

The ability of compost to aid the soil's capacity to retain water, improve soil porosity, and help plants absorb nutrients and minerals has long been understood. But I was surprised at the results of spraying compost tea directly on rose foliage. The vast number of beneficial microbes in the tea defended our plants from the "bad guys," like black spot and mildew. It was described to me as like having an auditorium filled with healthy friends. If someone sick with a flu bug tries to enter, all the seats are taken. Treated plants were less prone to attack by red spider mites.

We began spraying weekly during spring and fall (the seasons when roses in Texas grow actively), wetting the leaves thoroughly. Within 6 months, the improved health and vigor of our gardens proved that we were on the right track.

Roses Love Company

Gardeners often show their devotion to roses by planting them in monocultures. The unfair burden on roses to perform in isolation from other flowers reaches its extreme in formally styled beds of modern hybrid teas. Blooms are expected to be perfect all the time, sprayed and fussed over in straight rows of sameness. Old roses need not be put in this secluded prison; in fact, the beauty of antique roses is that they thrive in combination with perennials, annuals, shrubs, and flora of all types. Thus my final words of advice: Don't plant rose gardens—plant gardens that have roses in them.

Once again, nature shows us the way. Forests and prairies are composed of a diversity of plants that ebb and flow through the seasons, with ever-changing foliage, flowers, and fruit. We now strive to replicate this "natural" success in our ornamental gardens and landscape. In a mixed planting, the diversity of so many plant types creates year-round beauty even when roses are not at their peak. The burden is not on the rose to be perfect all the time, because the companion plants

add their own layers of form, texture, and color. Old roses love company.

At the Antique Rose Emporium, the ability of roses to collaborate with other garden plants allows us to have several themed gardens within our demonstration area. The children's garden has sunflowers and whimsical yard art integrated with the roses. Herbs and vegetables mingle with roses in the kitchen garden, while the Southwestern garden has grasses and agaves as companions to roses.

So instead of "ecidal" sprays, we're applying aerobic compost tea on a weekly basis and renewing mulch twice annually. This program, along with a diversity of proper plant selections, makes gardening fun again. The plumpness of leaves, the vigor and color of our gardens is vastly different than in the days of using synthetic fertilizers and store-bought chemicals. Most important to me, the gardens are now what they should be: a place where I can listen to the contented conversations of visitors as they stroll along paths populated by scented flowers, birds, and butterflies. It makes the garden a much bigger place than just a collection of plants. ♦



'Penelope'

'New Dawn'

'Stephen F Austin'

10 Roses for Organic Growers

This outstanding group of antique and modern roses has performed admirably with our organic regimen. All are repeat bloomers, which means they flower in waves from spring until frost.

'Old Blush'. This China rose dates back to the 18th century and represents all that is good in old roses: long life, repeat bloom, ease of care. As a parent for rose breeding, 'Old Blush' is responsible for giving its ever-blooming quality to modern roses. Hardy to USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 6.

'Souvenir de la Malmaison'. Large, multipetaled, blush pink flowers with a spicy perfume are borne on a 4-foot spreading shrub. This rose embodies romance. Zone 6.

'Marchesa Boccetta'. Fragrant, pink cabbagey flowers sit atop the foliage of this 5-foot upright shrub. Zone 5.

'Belinda's Dream'. The Texas extension program designated this pink,

full-flowered rose a "superstar" because of its fragrance, ease of care, and cut-flower quality. Zone 5.

'Perle d'Or'. Often called the "Yellow Sweetheart Rose," 'Perle d'Or' has first-scented 2-inch flowers that are pale apricot and look like lily crepe paper. This rose flowers throughout the growing season on a compact 4-foot shrub. Zone 5.

'Galloway Pink'. A "found" rose of uncertain heritage, this floury-lilac-pink variety exhibits superb blooming qualities even in the heat of summer. A bonus is the dramatic fall foliage of reds, oranges, and yellows. Zone 5.

'Penelope'. Soft, peachy blooms in bouquetlike clusters are noted for

their rich perfume. The sprawling shrub can reach 6 feet. Zone 6.

'New Dawn'. This climbing rose bears lightly fragrant, soft pink blooms on vigorous 20-foot stems. Foliage is dark, glossy, and resistant to black spot. Zone 5.

'Crepuscule'. Clusters of orange flowers nod under their own weight, lending a romantic effect to the garden. 'Crepuscule' is a climbing rose of excellent vigor. Zone 7.

'Stephen F Austin'. One of the Antique Rose Emporium's own Pioneer Rose introductions, this 6-foot shrub has shiny leaves that act as a foil to the fragrant flowers, which open pale yellow and mature to creamy white. Zone 5.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This list is based on the author's experience in an area of Texas with hot, humid summers and relatively mild (Zone 8) winters. However, many of the roses described here are widely adaptable except in the coldest climates. To learn which roses excel in your region, contact your state's Cooperative Extension Service.

For more information, see [Find It Here](#) on page 91.

The book cover features a vibrant, intricate mosaic background in shades of blue, yellow, and green, depicting various Tunisian architectural and cultural motifs. The title 'TUNISIAN ODYSSEY' is prominently displayed in the center, with 'TUNISIAN' in orange and 'ODYSSEY' in green, both in a serif font. Below the title, a white rectangular box with a yellow border contains the subtitle and author information. To the right of the book, there is a vertical strip of three images: a photograph of a historic building with arches, a solid light pink rectangle, and a photograph of a large pile of fresh oranges.

TUNISIAN ODYSSEY

A cook's travels reveal another Mediterranean diet.

By Deborah Madison ~ Travel photographs by Clifford A. Wright
Recipe photographs by Mitch Mandel ~ Food styling by Melissa Reiss

Masterpieces of Islamic art decorate the Great Mosque and walls in the ancient city of Kairouan in north-central Tunisia. In the market in Tunis, baskets of citrus fruits and olives are among the fresh ingredients that shape this Mediterranean country's culinary tradition.



A few years ago, I traveled to Tunisia with a group of other food writers, in search of a different side of the Mediterranean diet. Italy and Greece most often come to mind in terms of this healthy regional cuisine, but with so many cultures and countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, I reasoned that other foods could be just as healthy and sampling them would broaden my culinary repertoire.

This is my only visit thus far to Tunisia, but I would love to return, for the landscape and foodscape both resonated powerfully with me and—surprisingly—my life in New Mexico. After dozing off on a bus crossing the region of Sahel, I awoke to a vision of low adobe houses festooned with long chains of red chile peppers. For a moment, I didn't know where I was—was I back home? There, each fall, such *ristras* of drying peppers hang from adobe houses, especially in the agricultural areas. Later, when I had a chance to see the chiles drying on a wire screen on a street in Tunis, the capital city, I thought that they looked a lot like our northern New Mexico chiles, being roughly the same size and slightly twisted rather than straight. Whether or not they have the same flavor, instead of appearing in a *chile colorado*, these chiles are used to make the ubiquitous condiment *barissa*, which lends its fire and flavor to a great many dishes.

My traveling companion Clifford A. Wright (author of many books, including *A Mediterranean Feast*) writes of *barissa*, "Make this recipe and keep it in the refrigerator before attempting any other Tunisian recipe." *Barissa* is as good to eat here as it is in



Tunisia, and since that trip, I've made it regularly using *molido* (powder) from New Mexico native chiles or dried chiles.

The Mediterranean climate makes growing many foods possible; in addition to chiles, Tunisia is a significant producer of olives, for oil and brined for eating. Lemons, pomegranates, quinces, and other fruits somewhat exotic to us are commonplace. Many varieties of dates, for example, are abundant; date-filled semolina cakes and dates stuffed with almonds are popular sweetmeats. Our

group had the pleasure of eating dates and tangerines in an oasis of date palms, the fruits set out on large trays offered by Bedouins clad in traditional indigo-dyed robes.

In common with most Mediterranean diets, vegetables are plentiful and eaten at most meals in Tunisia. Fennel is a particular favorite, and I've never seen it growing as I saw it growing there—plentifully in large fields, as we might grow cabbages. Other widely used vegetables are the same types that we grow, including sweet peppers as well as hot ones, onions, tomatoes, squash (both winter and summer varieties), eggplants and potatoes, turnips, carrots, radishes, and beets. These vegetables, more so than lettuce, formed the basis of the daily salads we enjoyed, seasoned with olive oil and lemon. The same vegetables along with *barissa* also appeared in the many kinds of couscous dishes we tasted.

Though it is clearly the national seasoning, *barissa* is not the only flavoring Tunisian cooks employ. Frequently used herbs and spices include cumin, caraway, and parsley, while garlic, black and green olives, and fresh or preserved lemons are also used to vary the salad composition.

Below: In the marketplace, a local food vendor prepares couscous for sale, while at another stall, freshly caught red mullet are artfully displayed. Grains and fresh fish are dietary staples in many of the countries that border the Mediterranean Sea.





One of the signatures of the healthful Mediterranean diet is the use of meat as a condiment or side dish rather than as the main focus of a meal. Clifford and I ate in a working-class café, sharing a delicious and satisfying lunch that consisted of a large russet potato and strips of green pepper in a lamb broth, topped with a small piece of roasted lamb. It physically represented the food pyramid: the lamb morsel on top, supported by a base of vegetables. Couscous dishes also reflect this restrained use of meat protein, with the grain festooned with legumes and vegetables, and the meat present, but in much smaller amounts than we're used to serving.

Chickpeas, a popular legume, are eaten daily in what might be thought of as the universal breakfast dish: *tabbouleh*. Here the chickpeas are served in a broth seasoned with *harissa*, garlic,

Harissa, a mouth-warming paste of chiles, garlic, and spices, is easily made and used to flavor a variety of Tunisian dishes. It can also be used to perk up stews or grilled vegetables.

Harissa

I make this with dried New Mexico chile pods, soaked first in water. Covered with oil, which keeps out the air, *harissa* can be stored in the refrigerator for weeks. Use it to season vegetable stews and even vinaigrettes.

8 dried red New Mexico chile pods
2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground caraway seeds
½ teaspoon ground coriander seeds
½ teaspoons ground cumin seeds
1 tablespoon olive oil plus
extra to cover

1. Wipe the chiles with a damp cloth. Break off the stems, shake out as many seeds as you can, and pull out any large membranes. Discard any gray or yellowed areas, as they may have a moldy taste. Tear or crumble the chiles into pieces, then cover with boiling water and let stand at least 30 minutes to soften (an hour if making this in a mortar). Drain.

2. In a small food processor, puree the chiles with the garlic, spices, and oil until smooth. You may need to add extra oil to loosen the mass. If using a mortar, pound the garlic with the salt, caraway, coriander, and cumin to a paste, then add the chiles and keep pounding until smooth. Taste for salt and stir in the oil.

3. Store in a clean jar with olive oil filmed over the surface. Cover and refrigerate.

Makes about 1 cup

cumin, and lemon, then augmented with all kinds of additions, from pickled turnips to chopped tomatoes to scallions to coddled eggs. *Leblebi* provides a fortifying and savory start for the day.

Perhaps what impressed me most in Tunisia was the visual presentation of food, especially salads, which were symmetrically arranged. Slices and quarters of vegetables, halved eggs, strips of anchovies, rounds of radishes, olives and cheese, were carefully set out in patterns that reminded me of tiled walls and their complex designs. The sense of the mosaic as a key visual element was carried right into the cooking, making all the food, with the bright vegetable colors, as beautiful as it was good to eat. ♦

For more information, see [Find It Here](#) on page 88.



Fennel Salad with Olives, Eggs, and Tuna

The salads I saw and ate in Tunisia were beautiful, often complex arrangements of vegetables and their pickled garnishes, reflecting the tiled mosaics adorning buildings. Even simple salads were dazzling and colorful. Despite the emphasis on arrangement, these salads were not rigidly fixed, but bore a feeling of ease and charm, which made them especially appealing to me.

This salad isn't authentically Tunisian, but it's inspired by the arrangements of overlapping layers of thinly sliced vegetables, including fennel. The lemon dressing is peppered with the minced fronds, and because the fennel is raw and crisp, you'll want only the most tender parts of the bulb for this salad.

You can vary this to reflect your garden and palate. Add all kinds of peppers if you have them; include tomatoes or lemon cucumbers. 'French Breakfast' radishes with their scarlet tips are beautiful, as are red onions tossed in vinegar first to make them mellow.

For the dressing:

- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon chopped fennel greens

For the salad:

- 1 small red onion, peeled and thinly sliced in rounds
- White or rice wine vinegar, as needed
- 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded, veined, and thinly sliced
- 2 small fennel bulbs (about ½ pound total, trimmed), thinly sliced lengthwise
- 8 'French Breakfast' radishes
- 12 olives, green and black, mixed
- 2 hard-cooked eggs, quartered
- 1 small can tuna, drained
- 1 tablespoon capers

To make the dressing: In a small bowl, combine the lemon zest, juice, oil, ¼ teaspoon salt and some freshly ground pepper. Whisk vigorously until smooth and well blended. Stir in the fennel greens.

To make the salad: Toss the onion slices in a few tablespoons vinegar and set aside to marinate (turning occasionally so they color brightly) while you assemble the salad. On a large plate, arrange the pepper rings and top with the sliced fennel. Intersperse the radishes (scarlet ends facing outwards) with the olives around the edge. Arrange the hard-cooked eggs attractively in clusters of twos or threes, and mound the tuna in the center. Scatter the capers over the tuna. Drain the onions and set them around or over the salad. Spoon the dressing over all. Add a further pinch or two of salt and pepper, and serve.

Serves 4 as a first course; 2 for a salad lunch

'Medjool' Dates with Rose-Almond Paste and Tangerines

By April or May, we've already been cooking chabach and are looking forward to garden strawberries. However, it's also the very end of the citrus, with the sweet little 'Pixie' tangerines closing the season. Dates are still moist, too, especially the large, plump 'Medjool' from California.

3 ounces almond paste

A few drops red food coloring

1-3 teaspoons rose water, or to taste

A few tablespoons red, unsprayed rose petals from your garden, shredded

10 dates, slit lengthwise, seeds removed

Late-season tangerines, such as 'Pixie'

1. Knead the almond paste with the food coloring until it is as pink as you wish. Then work in rose water to taste, followed by the rose petals.

2. Divide the paste into 10 pieces, roll each piece into an oval, and stuff it into a date.

3. Arrange the dates on a plate, interspersed with the tangerines, and serve.



Hearty chunks of fresh vegetables steamed with chickpeas and flavored with warm spices make a nourishing and substantial meal.



Chickpea Stew with Eggplants, Tomatoes, and Peppers

Here's a place to use some different varieties of vegetables, such as 'Corno di Toro' peppers (instead of or in addition to bells), 'Ichiban' or 'Farmers' Long' eggplants, and all manner of tomatoes. Each size and type of vegetable will no doubt suggest a different way of chopping and slicing, but on the whole, keep the pieces large and attractive. Serve over couscous or bulgur, with a dab of *harissa* on each plate or stirred into the broth, to taste.

1-1½ pounds eggplant, one or more varieties
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
6 tablespoons olive oil (divided)
1 large onion, diced in 1-inch cubes
1 large yellow or red bell or other sweet, thick-fleshed pepper, cut into triangles or strips
2 zucchini, cut into rounds 1-2 inches thick
1 teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon turmeric
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1½ cups or more chunks of tomato, peeled and seeded first, any juices reserved
1 15-ounce can chickpeas, preferably organic
8 sprigs cilantro and 8 sprigs parsley, chopped
Harissa, for serving

1. Cut the eggplant into hefty chunks, choosing a shape that works with the variety you have. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and set aside for 30 minutes to release the juices. Rinse quickly and pat dry.

2. Heat 4 tablespoons of the oil in a wide skillet over high heat until hazy. Add the eggplant and stir quickly. Reduce heat to medium and cook, turning the pieces every few minutes, until golden, about 10 minutes, then turn off the heat and set aside.

3. Warm the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the onion, pepper pieces, and zucchini and cook until the onions are lightly browned around the edges, 8 to 10 minutes. Toward the end, add the paprika, turmeric, and garlic, taking care not to burn. Stir in the tomato paste, then moisten the pot with a few tablespoons water and scrape up the juices from the bottom. Add the tomatoes, eggplant, chickpeas, 1½ cups water (or the liquid from home-cooked or organic chickpeas), and 1 teaspoon salt. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover, and cook for 20 minutes, stirring once or twice. Stir in the cilantro and parsley.

Serves 4 to 6

✱ **The Organic Gardening Tunisia Seed Collection.** Specially selected by Deborah Madison from the Seed Savers Exchange catalog to bring the taste of Tunisia to your garden and kitchen. Each collection contains one packet each of these five varieties: Florence fennel, 'Cami From Bay' parsley, 'Georgia Flame' chili pepper, 'Napoleon' sweet pepper, and 'French Breakfast' radish. All seed is guaranteed organic. This exclusive collection is at the special price of \$29, including shipping and handling. To order, call 563-382-5990 or visit seedsavers.org and use code 1516 (08). Orders accepted until June 1. Sorry, but orders can only be shipped within the United States.

Below left: A woman and child rest at the entrance to the Kasbah Mosque in the seaside town of Bizerte. Founded by the Phoenicians in 1000 B.C., Bizerte is a prominent Mediterranean port and lies not far across the sea from Sicily and Sardinia. Below right: A basket of silvery dried sardines in the market.





The Garden's Home-Grown Ally


One of the primary principles of organic gardening is that of working with nature, using native resources and natural cycles to increase the abundance and health properties of the plants we grow. Many organic gardeners, however, are not acquainted with the valuable natural ally that embodies that core concept: mycorrhizal fungi. (For an introduction to mycorrhizal fungi, see *Pay Dirt*, February/March 2010.)

These unique members of the soil community are key players in numerous biological processes: helping plants take up more phosphorus, accumulating carbon in the soil, and improving its clumping ability. Mycorrhizal fungi don't accomplish these processes on their own; they work in concert with plant roots through the power of symbiosis.

Many species of mycorrhizal fungus spores exist naturally in most soils. If plant roots are present when soil conditions prompt

the fungal spore to germinate, the newly developing fungal "roots" (or hyphae) link with the cell walls of the plant roots and grow into them, creating structures that allow for the transfer of nutrients between the two organisms. In this symbiosis, the plant provides the mycorrhizal fungi the sugars they need to keep growing (since fungi can't photosynthesize to make their own sugars), and the fungi provide the plants with soil nutrients, particularly phosphorus, which their hyphae can extract from the soil more efficiently than the plant roots can.

When a large, vigorous network of mycorrhizal hyphae is associated with a plant's roots, it exponentially expands the "reach" and surface area of those roots, giving the plant greater access to the nutrients the soil has to offer. This symbiosis is, of course, great for plants, because the extra nutrients can fuel better growth and increase resistance to drought and disease. There are only two instances in which mycorrhizal fungi do not provide benefits to



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PAY DIRT

These mycorrhizal "wrapping and sticking" actions create soil aggregates that form air pockets in the soil.

plants: (a) when the soil already has such ideal nutrient and moisture levels that the plants can scavenge enough on their own, or (b) when the plants are brassicas (members of the mustard family), which do not allow the mycorrhizal fungi to colonize their roots.

David D. Douls, Ph.D., a microbiologist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), notes that different species of plants have different tendencies toward developing mycorrhizal associations. For example, he has found that leeks greatly benefit from mycorrhizal association in most years, while tomatoes and peppers are more likely to benefit when they are more nutrient- or water-stressed. Brassicas such as turnips and radishes do not form mycorrhizal associations under any conditions.

While these mycorrhizal associations can be excellent for plant growth, they also have positive impacts on the soil. Kris Nichols, Ph.D., a soil microbiologist with the USDA-ARS Northern Plains Research Station, is working to clarify the potential of mycorrhizal fungi to bind soil particles together into stable aggregates (or clumps) and increase amounts of long-lasting carbon in the soil. These benefits are derived in two ways: First, the mycorrhizal hyphae can physically wrap soil particles together, and, second, they secrete a substance, called glomalin, that is a sticky "goo" composed primarily of stable forms of carbon. These mycorrhizal "wrapping and sticking" actions create soil aggregates that form air pockets in the soil (holding air or water between the aggregates, where plant roots need them) and resist erosion. Keeping organic matter and nutrients right where you want them (in the garden, rather than running off downstream).

Get the underground army of mycorrhizal fungi to work in the garden by following a few simple management practices:

- If the soil is already high in phosphorus (a simple, inexpensive soil test can answer this), do not fertilize with a phosphorus-rich amendment, because high phosphorus levels inhibit development of associations between plants and mycorrhizal fungi. Manures and manure-based composts can be high in phosphorus, so test these amendments before adding them.
- Minimize digging (especially rototilling), as it can break mycorrhizal hyphae, preventing them from colonizing new plant roots and transporting nutrients.
- Grow a diverse mix of plants in your soil for as much of the year as possible, because mycorrhizae need active plant roots in order to develop.

Some techniques to keep the mix diverse:

- Rotate crops each year (as long as there aren't too many successive brassicas). Crop rotations are vital to mycorrhizal fungus populations because, in addition to providing a continuous succession of root hosts, different crops also tend to favor different species of mycorrhizal fungi.
- Plant an overwintering cover crop. In addition to adding organic matter and retaining soil nutrients, the cover crop offers host roots for the mycorrhizal fungi to colonize and helps them proliferate in preparation for next spring's planting. A good mix of crops above ground is the best way to support a mix of beneficial fungi below ground.
- Lighten up a bit on weed control, because, surprising as this may be, weed roots can also be excellent mycorrhizal hosts.

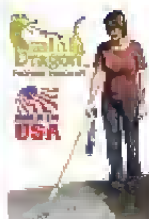
These simple, no-cost steps help keep the soil's native population of mycorrhizal fungi healthy and diverse, harnessing yet another gift of the natural environment to create a vibrant and abundant garden.

—Christine Ziegler, research and science editor, Rodale Institute

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Japanese Beetle Control

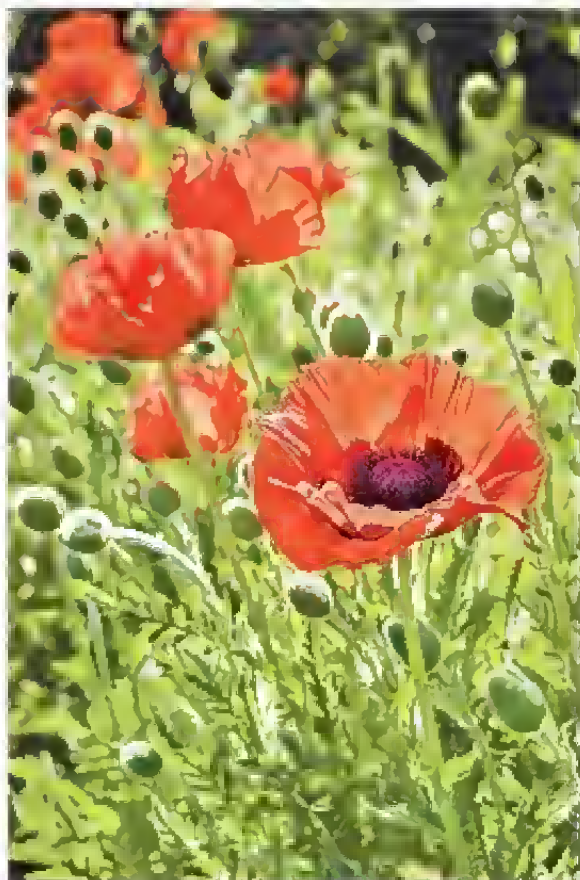
Q: What can we do to control Japanese beetles?

Paul Madonia
Worcester, Massachusetts

A: Adult Japanese beetles feed on more than 300 different types of landscape plants, while their grubs prefer to chew on roots and organic matter, especially in the soil under lawns. Prevent damage from adult Japanese beetles by growing plants that they find unappetizing, including dogwoods, euonymus, mulberry, hellebore, foxglove, and poppies. Beginning in June, regularly scout for beetles in the early morning or evening, when they are less active. Hand-pick them off affected plants and drop them into a jar filled with soapy water. Do not use traps baited with Japanese beetle pheromones, as they tend to lure in more beetles than they catch.

Reducing the population of Japanese beetle grubs in lawns can improve the appearance of the turf, but it often does little to mitigate the damage from adult Japanese beetles, as they will fly in from neighboring yards. "The best way for organic gardeners to control grub damage is to maintain a healthy lawn," says Albrecht Koppenhöfer, Ph.D., professor of turfgrass entomology at Rutgers University. "A lawn can tolerate about 10 grubs per square foot. Also, by maintaining your grass organically, you'll most likely have higher densities of natural predators and parasites of the beetle and other turfgrass insect pests." To make your lawn less attractive to Japanese beetles, Koppenhöfer suggests reducing irrigation in July, when the adult females lay their eggs. "They like to lay eggs in moist soil, and the eggs need moisture to stay viable," explains Koppenhöfer. "If it is dry during the egg-laying period, lush irrigated lawns will draw in egg-laying females from drier surroundings. In years with normal precipitation, the females will lay their eggs wherever they like."

Biological control products, such as Grub Guard, which contain living nematodes from the genus *Heterorhabditis*, can be effective, but the soil should be kept moderately moist for one week after applying to optimize nematode activity. Products containing bacterial milky disease (also called milky spore) are another organic option, but recent research results on their effectiveness are mixed, and they are not a good choice in areas where the ground stays frozen for long periods.



Clockwise from top:
Adult Japanese beetles feed on an astonishing range of plants, but they avoid poppies, foxglove, and dogwood.

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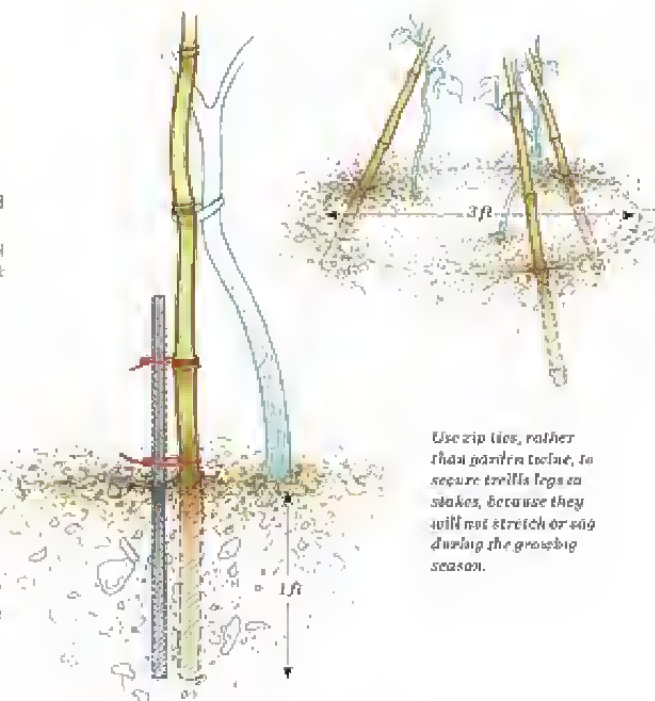
ASK ORGANIC GARDENING

Sturdy Trellises

Q. My husband built several trellises for our garden. I'm concerned they may tip over in high winds. How do you recommend I secure them?

*Karen Zielenka
Hempstead Falls, New York*

A. Start by using sturdy materials, such as 1-by-1 cedar stakes, 1-inch-diameter bamboo poles, or welded wire mesh, to construct trellises. To ensure a trellis's stability, set its legs firmly into the ground. "I make a hole that is about 1 foot deep, put the trellis leg in, and then tamp the soil back around it," explains David Kinsey, the living history farm supervisor at the Museum of the Rockies, which is located on the windswept plains near Bozeman, Montana. For extra security, place a 24-to-36-inch-long rebar stake into the soil next to each trellis leg. Use a heavy hammer to drive the stake in at least 12 inches. Attach the trellis legs to the stakes with zip ties. When building tepee-style trellises, make the base at least 3 feet in diameter. Kinsey also suggests string delicate plants and trellises on the leeward side of buildings and taller crops. "We use corn as a windbreak and plant tomatoes on the south side of a building to protect them," he says.



Worm-Free Apples

Q. How can I protect my apples from worm damage without spraying?

*Peg Perri
West Salem, Wisconsin*

A. Placing a nylon mesh bootie—one of the little socks used when trying on shoes—over developing apples effectively protects the fruit from codling moth and apple maggot damage. This low-tech barrier prevents these pests' larvae from tunneling into the fruit. For best results, thin fruits to two or three per cluster when they are the size of a dime. This timing provides protection from codling moths, which lay eggs in early spring, and apple maggot flies, which lay eggs in late spring and early summer. To apply the barrier, slip it loosely over the apple, being sure to cover the stem. Twist the top of the barrier (which stretches as the fruit grows) around the stem to secure it. The Seattle Tree Fruit Society (seattletreefruit.society.com) sells packages of barriers.

For more information, see *Find It Here*, page 91.

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Preventing Late Blight

Q: Last year, we had a major problem with late blight in our garden. What can we do to prevent it this year?

*Barbara Gail
Jefferson, Pennsylvania*

A: Late blight is a very serious fungal disease that affects the nightshade family (*Solanaceae*), including potatoes and tomatoes. Cool, wet weather and widely distributed, contaminated tomato seedlings from industrial plant operations created a perfect storm for the major outbreak of late blight that struck the eastern United States last summer.

"Late-blight spores can survive only on living tissue," says Meg McGrath, Ph.D., a plant pathologist at Cornell University who traced the 2009 outbreak. "The spores over winter on potatoes. So the biggest threat is from infected potatoes that stayed in the ground or a compost pile." She suggests pulling up and disposing of any potato plants that sprout from tubers planted last year, buying certified disease-free seed potatoes, and carefully inspecting tomato seedlings for signs of blight. "Do not buy ones with brown spots on their leaves or stems," cautions McGrath.

As the summer progresses, look for late-blight symptoms: dark brown lesions on stems and leaves; white fungal growth on lesions, particularly on the undersides of leaves; and brown, watery pockets of rot on fruit. "Immediately remove and dispose of any diseased plant materials," says McGrath. "Be persistent and pull out the whole plant if the disease progresses." Most important, tell your neighbors that you have a problem with late blight and send a sample to your local extension office. "This is a disease that quickly impacts entire communities, so it's important that people report outbreaks," McGrath says. Learn more at her website: hort.cornell.edu/lateblight.

Ask Organic Gardening is edited by Will Evans Gullissey. Have a question for our experts? See "How to Reach Us" on page 12.

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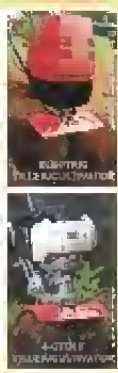
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Call for Recipes

We invite you to submit your recipes for entrees, side dishes and desserts that incorporate fresh food from your garden or farmers market and have become an integral part of your family's holiday meal traditions. We will select three winning recipes to be profiled in our December 2010/January 2011 issue.



TO ENTER

To enter, please email your recipe and a .jpg photo to holidayrecipecontest@rodale.com. Recipes must be original and previously unpublished. Limit 1 entry per person. Winning recipes will be judged on originality, taste, ease of preparation, presentation, and use of at least one of the following sponsor products:



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GOOD BUG, BAD BUG



Peel away the top layer of a damaged leaf to find the larvae. Below is a spinach leaf miner tunnel.

Spinach Leafminer

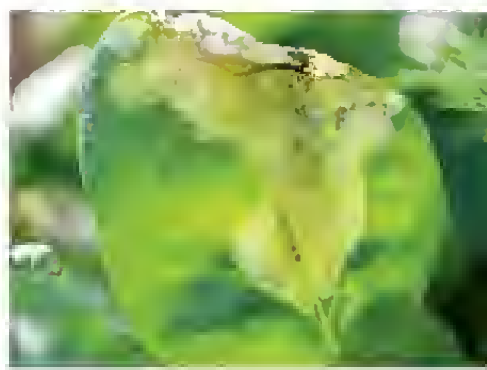
Pegomya hyoscyami

Spinach leafminers appear in spring, like young robins or daffodils, but nowhere near as welcome. The fly emerges, mates, and lays eggs on the underside of a leaf. Larvae hatch from the eggs, burrow between the leaf layers, and begin to eat, etching a serpentine path of destruction. Eventually the larvae drop to the soil, pupate, and produce the next of up to four generations, each of which lasts about 3 weeks. The leafminers' telltale trails can appear in the leaves of everything from tomatoes to ornamentals, but pose a real threat only to cool-season greens such as spinach and chard.

The first step in controlling these pests is monitoring. "Look for a small fly, more delicate than a housefly but larger than a gnat," says entomologist Ruth Hazzard. "Check for tiny rows of little white eggs on the undersides of leaves." Rub them off by hand. If you notice trails, immediately remove and trash—but don't compost—affect leaves. Additional control tactics:

- Exclude adult flies by using row covers.

- Encourage parasitic wasps by planting nectar- and pollen-rich flowers with small, shallow blooms, such as dill and yarrow.
- Cultivate the soil in fall to disturb pupae.
- Control weeds such as lamb's-quarter and dock that are known to be leafminer hosts.
- Rotate spinach, chard, and beet crops.
- Use a neem-based spray in severe cases. Neem acts as a repellent and also slows the leafminers' ability to feed, interrupting the cycle. —Robin Chorzioff





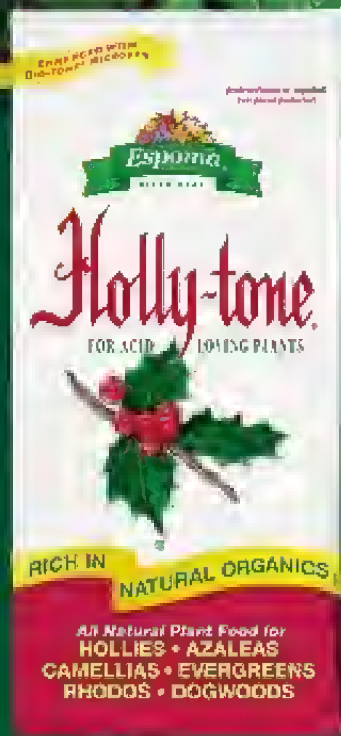
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Big Rewards of Small Livestock

The benefits of tending a mini herd can outweigh the effort and expense.

If you are considering the purchase of any kind of small livestock, you must realize that to most experienced hobby farmers and acreage putterers these animals are, first and foremost, living lawn ornaments. Small livestock do fulfill some more prosaic purposes—you can eat, shear, or milk them—but economics of scale scotch any thoughts of profit motive. This is not venture-capital territory. But if you want to spin the wool from your llamas, giggle as your fainting goats fall over, marvel as poodle-sized spring lambs perform multiple triple salchows, or hear your miniature donkey call you at lunchtime, you will be rewarded in your purchase.

These little critters will come to like you as much as you like them. (Well, most of them, anyway. There are some adorable-looking beasts that turn out to have personalities just like your ex-boss.) If you have children, caring for these “pets” teaches responsibility and reward in a way that cleaning the cat box never will. And barnyard babies? Some of us would say they are more fun than people babies, and they drool much less.

More pluses: Small livestock mow grass so that you don’t have to (saving time, fuel, and the environment). Most small livestock actually improve pasture, whereas horses and cattle degrade it. And they provide manure—black gold to us gardeners. Llamas are so accommodating they poop in the same place every time, making it easy to collect.

But on the downside:

- They are expensive. You must build strong fences, not just to keep your animals in but also to keep coyotes and other predators—even the neighbor’s dogs—out. Your crew will need to eat, so you’ll be carving out time to zip to the feed store for feed, hay, and straw. (You already bought a truck, didn’t you? Or are you going to pay extra to have this stuff delivered?) The vet must be paid, for even the greenest herd requires vaccines for things like tetanus. Summer coats need to be sheared,

hooves trimmed. Other necessary supplies: stock tanks, heat lamps, water heaters.

- They can be too much of a good thing. I raised sheep for quite a while, because my wife and I love lamb, which as you know can be expensive.

But after a few trips to the locker (a small-time, rural, custom-processing plant—and another expense), we decided that our pricey breed didn’t actually taste as good as most restaurant cuts. Also, one lamb pretty much filled up both freezers of our kitchen and basement fridges. And we ended up with many, many cuts we wouldn’t ordinarily have chosen. (How much lamb-burger can one man stand?)

- There aren’t that many like-minded people. Which is to say, you may jump at the chance to lay out \$150 for a registered whiteface ewe or \$400 for a llama that performs no reasonable function, but how many other folks within driving

Not all rewards can be counted in folding green.

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EARTH MATTERS

Covering its nostrils, I gave it a lip lock and breathed slowly and determinedly into its mouth.

distance would do the same? Bottom line: You will have trouble selling offspring. And this time of year, you may be swimming in offspring.

• Winter. Do you really want to go out to the barn in misty weather? Come springtime, would you be willing to spend the night out there helping frightened moms give birth?

All that said, why would any rational person in these economically troubled times go through all this?

First, because you can. Isn't that why you got a little patch of land in the first place?

And second, not all rewards are counted in folding green.

When our first llama gave birth, it was out in the pasture on a fairly chilly, but not freezing, afternoon. To reprise a line from my favorite Jesse James movie, "Ain't that a wonderment?" As I checked on the progress of our baby cria (yes, you will learn a new vocabulary as well) throughout the afternoon, it seemed to be faltering. And, with a look of finality, it eventually went down.

So there I was, kneeling in the middle of the pasture as the sun was going down, with a limp llama in my lap, its eyes fixed

and closing. So I did what anybody else would have done in this kind of situation. I did what you would do. I improvised. I gave it mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Covering its nostrils, I gave it a lip lock and breathed slowly and determinedly into its mouth. I didn't even know how to give mouth-to-mouth to a person, and there I was attempting it on livestock! And you know: It worked. The little guy quickly revived, at least enough to give us time to call the vet to meet us at his office, even though by now it was dark and after hours. The vet showed me how to "tube" my little friend, sticking a long flexible straw down its throat and pumping nourishment into its stomach. I was also told to keep the baby warm and dry all night, using a hair dryer on occasion. So the two of us spent the night on the floor of our laundry room, and neither of us got much sleep. But by morning, it had four on the floor and was ready to be returned to the barn and its mom.

Made me feel pretty dang good about the whole thing. That was the ultimate reward. But I had llama breath for a week.

—Craig Summers Black

PHOTO: JAMES HAMILTON/ISTOCK

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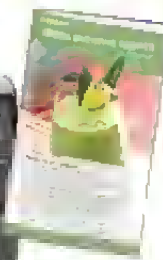
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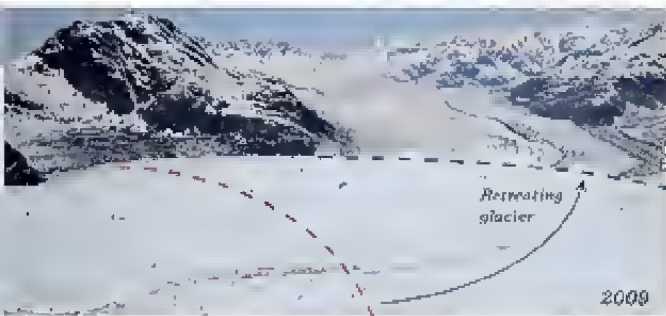
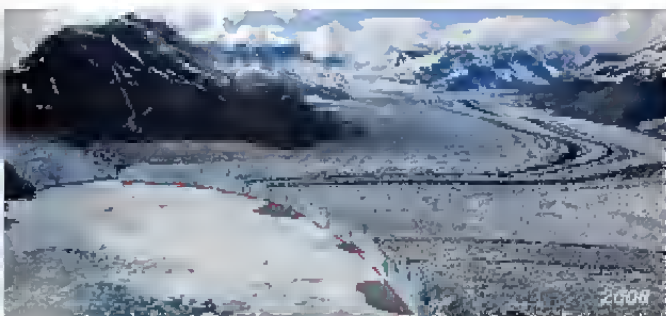
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"In the world of the Arctic environments, climate change is real and it is present," says Balog. "The changes are happening. They're visible. They're photographable. They're measurable."

Some of the team's most compelling photos come from Alaska's vast Columbia glacier. In less than 4 years, it retreated more than 2 miles, leaving the surface of Prince William Sound covered with floating ice (see bottom photo at left). Over the next 2 decades, this glacier is projected to retreat more than 9 miles—an astonishing loss that the Extreme Ice Survey is capturing in all its terrible glory. —*Amanda Kimble-Evans*

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Korean scientists testing the antifungal properties of pumpkin rind—a common ingredient used in a variety of traditional medicines to treat everything from diabetes to microbial infections—found that folk wisdom is often rooted in truth. It turns out that the pumpkin-rind protein, Pr-2, is effective at suppressing the growth of fungi responsible for yeast infections in infants and adults, wine-grape blight, tomato and potato diseases, and fusarium wilt. “The protein exhibits growth inhibition against 10 species of harmful pathogenic fungi,” said Kyung-son Hahm, endowed professor of medicine at Chosun University.

The researchers see a strong potential for both the pharmaceutical and agricultural industries to produce new natural alternatives to chemical-based antifungal medicines and sprays. But, they caution, more research still needs to be done on exactly how to turn the protein into a viable commercial formulation. Until then, the field is wide open for enterprising lay researchers to see if a low-tech pumpkin product might work wonders on the home garden. —A.K.E.

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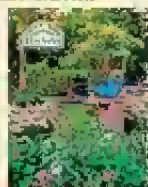
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Gardening requires perseverance and elbow grease. Lighten the load with our wide range of efficient and versatile groundbreaking tools for preparing your garden beds. These excellent tools are made of high-quality materials for maximum strength and durability, and should give you years of service. We offer a variety of short-handled and long-handled spades, forks and cultivators because we know that using the right tool makes any job easier – easier on your joints and muscles, as well as on your plants.

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To order these products, call or visit us online. You can request a copy of our 172-page garden tools catalog or browse it online. 1-800-683-8170 www.leevalley.com



WE LIKE THIS!



Garden Gloves

The right pair of gloves does more than keep a gardener from getting a "dirt manicure"; it also reduces the chance of developing blisters and protects skin from the sun and insect bites. No glove suits every gardening need; gardeners inevitably amass a "wardrobe," yet usually return to the comfiest pair. All our favorites are machine-washable.

—Abby Paulette

1. West County Work Gloves

Our favorite feature of these multipurpose gloves is the terry cloth brow wipe built into the back of the thumb.

BEST FOR: Most tasks.
\$20, westcountygardener.com

2. Bionic Rose Gardening Gloves

Ultraprotective gloves designed by an orthopedic hand surgeon.

BEST FOR: Handling roses, pruning thorny or prickly plants, and protecting the forearms of those with sensitive skin.
\$30, bionicrose.com

3. Simply Mud Gloves

The lightweight nitrile coating protects hands from moisture while offering a secure grip. The breathable back keeps hands from getting clammy.

BEST FOR: Gardening in muddy, wet conditions.
\$6, littlegoodgloves.com



extra

The Body Shop Hemp Hand Protector Cream

Gardeners who prefer to work sans gloves know how soil wicks moisture from the skin. The fatty acids in this heavy cream form a barrier to keep moisture in. \$10 for 1 ounce, thebodyshop-usa.com For more information, see Find It Here, page 91.

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Every day, aches and pains can get in the way of living life to the fullest—from living life on your terms.

Wobenzym® N is the natural choice for joint and tendon health, increased flexibility and mobility, as well as temporary relief from the aches, pains and muscle soreness due to everyday activities.*

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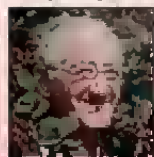
Just one Doyle Thornless Blackberry

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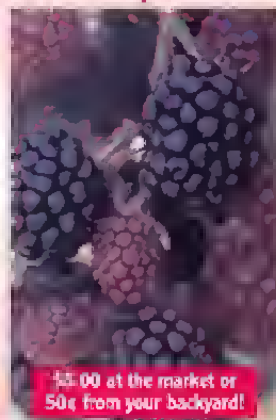
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Find Your Fit

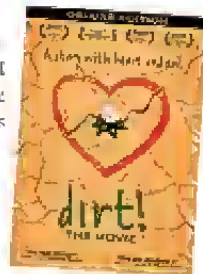
Choosing a glove that fits well not only keeps your hand comfortable but also extends the life of the glove and reduces wear in the finger tips, usually the first place to wear out. Two tips for getting a perfect fit:

- Glove sizes vary depending on the brand. Using a tape measure, determine your size by measuring the circumference of the palm of your dominant hand at its widest point. Exclude the thumb. The number in inches is your glove size. Compare it against the sizing chart for the brand you want to buy.
- Choose a glove made specifically for your gender: Women have narrow hands and long fingers (and fingernails), and men tend to have wider hands and shorter fingers.

The Dirt on Dirt

Dirt! The Movie, inspired by William Bryant Logan's book *Dirt: The Estatic Skin of the Earth*, premieres on PBS's *Independent Lens*

this April. The documentary explores this unappreciated and finite resource, and the myriad ways it sustains us even as we take it for granted. The filmmakers traveled the world interviewing the passionate visionaries working to save the planet's life force. By the end of the hour, you'll have new respect for the life that lies beneath our feet. Watch the premiere of *Dirt! The Movie* Tuesday, April 20, at 10 P.M. on PBS. Check local listings. —Katie Walker



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With the amazing ComposTumbler, you'll have bushels and bushels of crumbly, ready-to-use compost—in just 14 days! (And, in the ten months it takes to make compost the old way, your ComposTumbler can produce *hundreds of pounds* of rich food for your garden!)

Say good-bye to that messy, open compost pile (and the flies, pests, and odors that come along with it)! Get rid of the frustration of trying to turn compost in stationary containers. Bid a happy farewell to the strain of trying to turn heavy, wet piles with a pitchfork. The ComposTumbler is truly a joy to use!

The Better Way

Compost-making with the ComposTumbler is neat, quick, and easy!

Gather up leaves, old weeds, kitchen scraps, lawn clippings, etc. and toss them into the roomy drum. Then, once each day, give the handle a few easy spins.

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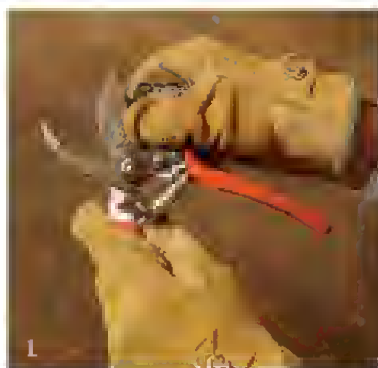
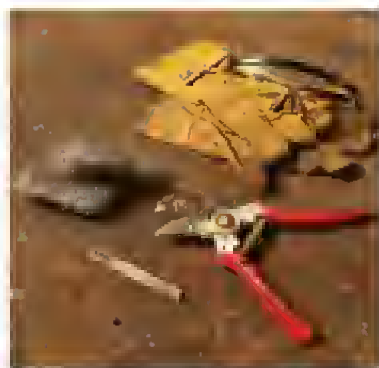
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Staying Sharp

Dull pruners, loppers, and shears do more harm than good. Blunt blades can crush, bruise, and tear plant tissue, making it more vulnerable to disease. Sharp tools, on the other hand, work quickly and efficiently with less effort.

1. Wash the blade in soapy water to remove sap and grime. Wipe dry and then buff off any rust with medium-coarse steel wool.
2. Open the pruners wide with the beveled edge of the cutting blade facing you.

For added safety, secure the pruners in a bench vise. Protect your hands and eyes by wearing gloves and goggles.

3. Position a medium (or coarse, if the shears are badly dulled) diamond-hand file against the blade at the same angle as the bevel. With one smooth stroke, draw the file along the contour of the blade and toward its tip. Use moderate pressure and keep the file at the same angle throughout the stroke. Always file away from your body. Continue until a sharp edge forms—typically 10 to 20 strokes, depend-

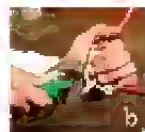
ing on the condition of the blade. Whether working on bypass or anvil-style pruners or loppers, sharpen *only* the beveled cutting blade. Finish with a few strokes of a fine file to refine the edge.

4. Turn the pruners over and slide the fine file over the flat side of the blade a few times to remove any burrs.

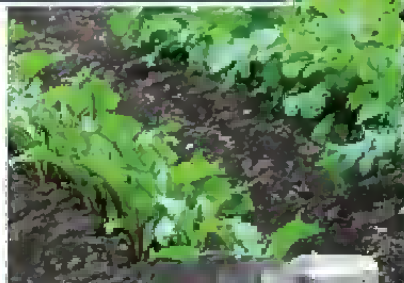
5. Wipe linseed oil over the sharpened blade to condition the metal and prevent rust. Use a soft cloth coated in oil to thoroughly clean the pruners after each use. —*Willi Evans Galloway*

options

A few swipes with a fine file (a) may be sufficient for a quick touch-up of pruning shears. With one hand, hold the shears flat against a work surface; position the file at the same angle as the cutting edge's bevel. Even simpler: An inexpensive scissors sharpener (b) hones the blade in seconds while a built-in guard shields fingers.



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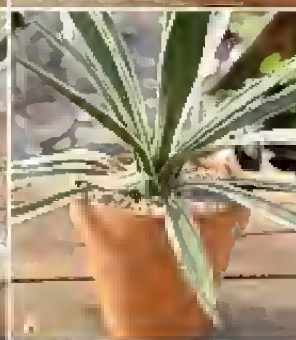
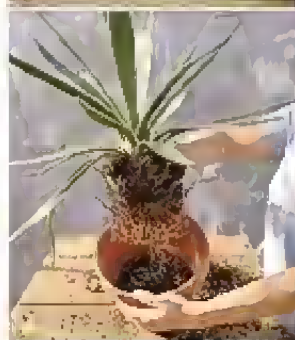
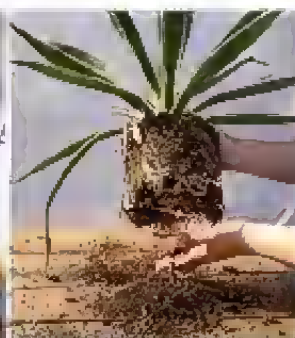
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SKILLS & ABILITIES



How to Repot a Succulent

Slow-growing succulents handle being potbound better than most houseplants, but they grow best when their roots have more room. Debra Lee Baldwin, author of the new book *Succulent Container Gardens* (Timber Press, 2010), offers advice on repotting these easy-care plants.

1. Slide the plant from its pot, making sure to support the plant and rootball with one hand. If the plant does not slip out easily, invert the pot and tap the rim on the edge of a hard surface while holding the crown of the plant.
2. Gently tease the tangled mass of roots apart, scratching away some of the old potting soil and checking for insect pests like mealybugs as you go.
3. Choose a pot that is 1 or 2 inches wider than the original.

Put a piece of window screen over the drainage hole to prevent soil from washing out.

4. Fill the pot halfway with fresh soil, using either a half-and-half mix of regular potting soil and crushed pumice or a specialized cactus potting mix. Position the plant in the center of the container with the crown 1 inch below the rim, spreading its roots over the fresh soil. Add more soil, gently tamping it into place. Water the plant in well.
5. Spread ¼ inch of sand over the soil surface, then add a decorative topdressing of crushed rock, pea gravel, or tumbled glass.
6. The gravel topdressing prevents soil from splashing out of this variegated agave's pot during watering and adds a finished look. —W.E.G.

What's a Succulent?

Succulents are plants that have adapted to climates with limited rainfall by storing water in their leaves. They are recognizable by their plump, fleshy leaves that have waxy or fuzzy surfaces. Succulents' ability to withstand heat and drought makes them good candidates for arid-climate landscapes, hot spots next to pavement and pots and planters in sunny exposures indoors or out. The group includes familiar garden plants such as sedums, hens and chicks and cacti.



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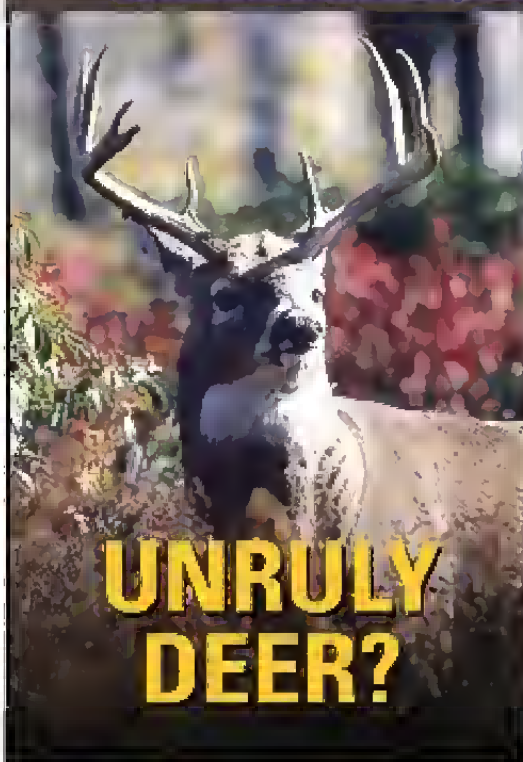
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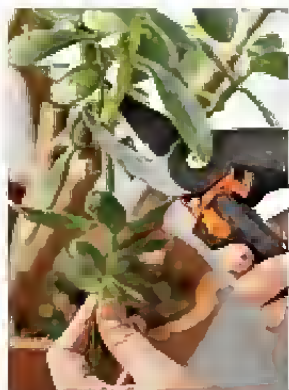
Taking Succulent Cuttings

Succulents, including jade plant (shown) and kalanchoe, root easily from cuttings.

1. Use a knife or pruning shears to cut a 4- to 6-inch stem just below a node—the swollen area where leaves adjoin the stem. Stems of either new or old growth can be rooted.
2. Remove any leaves from the lower half

of the stem. Allow the cutting to air-dry for a few days, during which time a callus will form over the raw cut.

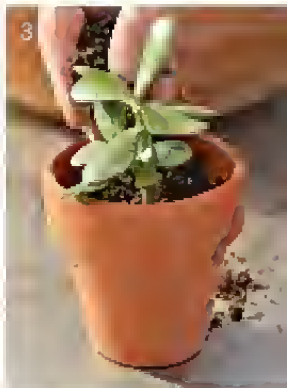
3. Put the cutting into a pot filled with damp, coarse potting mix. Don't worry if the leaves shrivel—they will plump back up as roots form. —W.E.G.



2



3



Scratch and Sow

Most seeds need only to be placed in warm, moist soil to leap into growth. Others, due to hard seed coats, are slower to break dormancy. A technique called scarification improves the germination rates of seeds with water-resistant seed coats.

In nature, weather, gritty soil, and even acid in the digestive tracts of animals abrade the seed, letting moisture in to spark germination. Gardeners can mimic this process at home by scratching the seed coat, which allows water to permeate the seed and prompts germination.

Method: Scuff individual seeds by dragging them across a sheet of medium-grit sandpaper. Avoid making deep scratches that expose the underlying, lighter-colored embryo, and prevent damaging the seed's growth points by sanding only their sides. Scarify large amounts of seeds by placing



them in a jar with coarse sand and shaking vigorously until the seed coats are dull and scratched. Sow scarified seeds immediately.

Works for: Morning glory, moonflower, castor bean, New Zealand spinach. —W.E.G.

Find instructions for two more seed pretreatments at OrganicGardening.com/pretreatments.

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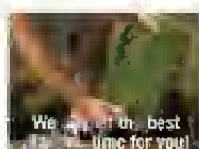
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Many established Zoysia lawns only need to be mowed once or twice a season. Watering is rarely, if ever, needed – even in summer!



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When ordinary lawns brown up in summer heat and drought, your Zoysia lawn stays green and beautiful. The hotter it gets, the better it grows. Zoysia thrives in blistering heat (120°), yet it won't winter kill to 30° below zero. It only goes off its green color after killing frosts, but color returns with consistent spring warmth. Zoysia is the perfect choice for water restrictions and drought areas!

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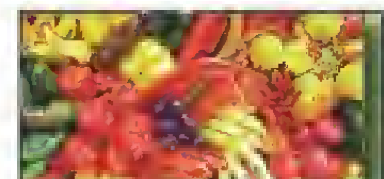
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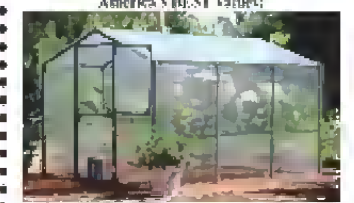
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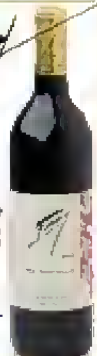
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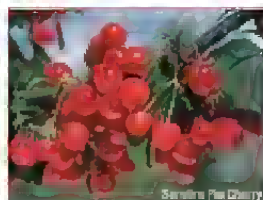
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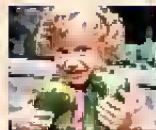


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Common Ground: Sacred Seeds, p. 24
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Simply Fresh: The Color Purple, p. 26.
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 Mario Rodale's book *Organic Manifesto* (Rodale, 2010,
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Why I Wrote Organic Manifesto

A few years ago, I began to worry. When my oldest daughter was a teenager (she is now 27), the chatter was about how organic wasn't "good enough," that the government regulations were too lax and didn't take into account things like the humane treatment of animals, social justice, and health concerns. Some farmers began to think of themselves as "beyond organic" (an imprecise term that is generally considered a melding of the concepts of organic, local, and sustainable), and somewhere a marketer was probably dreaming up organic Twinkies. But at last, I thought, healthy discussions were taking place, conversations and debates that could lead to better regulations and broadened definitions of organic. All of this, I thought, would support the expanding market for organic food.

When my middle child was a grade-schooler (she is now 11), the local-food movement hit like a giant socialist food craze. The good news was that farmers' markets popped up all over the place, revitalizing local farm food communities. The bad news was that consumers soon became confused, as the movement became an either-or proposition: One was either "Local" or "Organic," 100 percent locavore or random grazer. Most of the local-vs.-organic debate revolved around the use of fossil fuels to transport food. But this was a distraction from the more substantial and controversial aspect of the issue: using fossil fuels to create artificial chemicals that sustain nonorganic methods of food production.

I work in two worlds—the world of environmentalists and the world of health experts—and I realized that these two worlds were not communicating with each other. In the health world, where I sit on the advisory board of the Children's Environmental Health Center at Mount Sinai, headed by Philip Landrigan, M.D., there is mounting concern over the impact of chemicals, especially agricultural chemicals, on our health and especially that of our children. Yet this did not feature in any of the discussions about our food choices or the expanding environmental crisis.

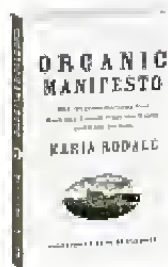
Is it any wonder that many Americans gave up trying to figure it all out? Our focus on what really matters most—the health and safety of our children, our families, and the future viability of life



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on this planet—was lost completely. That's when I started to get really worried, and angry, too, and decided that I needed to write my recently published book.

My youngest child was an infant (she is now 3) when the economy tanked, and sure enough, the press began to chatter about the expensive elitism of organic food, saying people were struggling to afford food, period. But since you are holding *Organic Gardening* magazine in your hands and reading this column, you already suspect—or are already of the firm opinion—that organic is the same lifestyle option, and that our survival may well depend on it. And, like me, you're ready to turn this conviction into action. My kids are glad I did, and yours will be too. That's my *Organic Manifesto*. —Maria Rodale



For more information about Maria's book, see Find It Here on page 91, or visit Rodale.com, where you can also follow Maria's blog.

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